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Q U E

SHOOTING AND FISHING

IN

LOWER BRITTANY.

A COMPLETE AND PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO SPORTSMEN.

By JOHN KEMP, Esq.

(AUTHOR OF "SKETCHES FROM THE SOUTH OF FRANCE," ETC.)

LONDON:

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS.

1859.

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Dedicated to

HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF HAMILTON AND BRANDON,

By his Friend,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

SPORTSMEN of the British Isles; the following pages are addressed to you, for the double purpose of enlightening you about a country that is almost unknown, and to induce others to go and write a "plain unvarnished tale" about the numerous sporting *terræ incognitæ* that grace the map of Europe. From my own experience, I know what it is to be set down in an uncivilised country with only Murray in my hand, and gun and dog by my side, but without a scrap of knowledge of where to go for sport, or how to set about the attainment of it. The secrets of the cities of Europe are laid bare by the most accurate of guide books, and each wonder can be visited in quick succession by the stranger, so simple are the directions that the said volumes give. Why should we sportsmen not have our

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books to depend upon? Why should we have only hearsay as our guide, when we wish to know something about the woodcock-shooting in Greece, the quail-shooting in Algeria, the trout-fishing in the Tyrol, or the salmon-fishing in the north of Spain? Will no sporting Murray arise, and give us a notion of where we are to make our bivouack, what barren spots we are to avoid, and what we are to *pay?* Surely there are many amongst us that would be glad to forsake the *battue*, and leave it for those whose time is of value, and who can but seldom snatch a day for the pleasures of sport. Surely there are many who are tired of paying high rents, and receiving nothing as a set-off for their investments, and who, "*auspice* sporting Murray," would be pleased at setting forth in quest of health-giving amusement in foreign lands. People, I think, only want to know beforehand that they are not starting on a positive wild goose chase, to induce them to pack up their portmanteaus and sporting paraphernalia, and try their luck.

In following out this idea, I have dwelt, im-

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partially I hope, on both the agreeables and disagreeables that the sporting tourist will probably meet with in Brittany. I have endeavoured to show, how in every place there is some drawback, that will prevent its being considered perfect, and how such imperfection is to be remedied. I have also put forth that useful thing, "a list of prices," without which, in these days of mighty Mammon, no account would be considered complete. Next, I have been at pains to avoid going over the ground that other travellers have trod before me, viz., the recital of marvellous stories and legendary lore that have graced the pages of all previous books about Brittany. Many a time have I wished to plunge into details, respecting superstitious rites that I have witnessed, and to describe the curious ideas and wonderful language of *Les braves Bretons*. Often have I lingered over the old churches and monuments—some of the latter so far removed from the ordinary routes of travellers as never to have been gazed on by English eyes,—and longed to commit some description of them to paper.

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Many a time have I wished to recite the wild legends that I have heard in country Inns, when ensconced in some wide chimney corner; but I have, for the most part, forborne to do so. I have always kept before my eyes the works of former travellers, and felt, like a sportsman, that I would not poach on other people's ground, or shoot where some one else had just been. So, principally confining myself to sporting intelligence, I address myself to the British public, and sincerely hope that the information contained in the following pages will answer the double purpose of enlightening people about Brittany, as well as inciting better men to "open up" the resources of other countries, as yet unknown to us.

DECEMBER 1ST, 1859.

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SHOOTING AND FISHING

IN

LOWER BRITTANY.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT is the answer we always give to some lucky friend, who informs us that he is "off" for Scotland, Norway, or some other sporting locality, but—"Good luck to you, and let me know how you have got on?" If we cannot go thither ourselves, our next greatest pleasure is to hear what our friends have done, and by our own firesides thoroughly digest the same. For the same reason I always look forward to the end of each week, when I can peruse the columns of the dear old "Life," or the worthy "Field," and read how Messrs. Jones, Brown, and Robinson have been disporting themselves in their respective spheres. I like to hear how goes it with the happy grouse-shooter, fox-hunter, or salmon-fisher; and the faithful record of their proceedings falls on no inattentive

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reader. True, I may guess from past experience that in Jones's 12th of August bag of forty brace there were included certain small victims, which a less excited sportsman would have spared; Brown may not have seen *all* the run he so graphically describes, and has, perhaps, drawn largely on his imagination as regards the distance and the enormous fences that, he says, himself and friends had the happy privilege of compassing. Robinson, in his glowing account of the capture of that 20 lb. salmon, may not inform me that his gilly told him where to "put his fly," and nerved his trembling arm to give the required strike, by screaming out at the right moment, "*Now* give it him, sir." Still I like to read their pleasant tales, by means of which I can recall old scenes by flood and field, and feel myself once more by the tumbling Shin, the more sedate Thurso, or some extensive brae of bonny Scotland.

But now, when I take up my weekly chronicler, I at once replace it on the table, and feel myself an ill-used individual. It is no pleasure to me to read accounts of universal failure, or to find that the Lament instead of the Pibroch is sounded from all parts of the British sporting hemisphere. I cannot take any interest in accounts wherein gentlemen sum up their season's sport (?) as follows:—"Game killed on Eskdaile, Invernesshire, by three guns, from 12th of August to October 1st; Rental, 350*l.*: Grouse, 49 head!! black game, 30; partridges, 17; wood-

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cocks, 5; hares, 1; blue hares, 21; rabbits, 7; roe, 2 —total, 132 head!!!" In Mayo, Ireland, the shooting over 10,000 acres produced sixty brace of grouse; and the unhappy renter intimates that he pays liberally for his exclusive right. In Wales, gentlemen have been toiling over mountains and killing one, two, and three brace of grouse per diem; though it must be allowed that the rent paid for this privilege was not exorbitant. After reading many accounts as bad, if not worse than these, I cannot wonder that the tide of sportsmen is evidently setting West. I cannot blame my friend Smith for going Canadawards, and yielding up his rubicund countenance to the thirsty mosquitoe, that he may enjoy more sport than his own country can afford. I cannot wonder that Jones betakes himself to Newfoundland, to the horror of elderly relatives, who fear the watery main and all that appertains thereto. Perhaps even Jones himself, on his return thence, would as soon have escaped the "durance vile" that the Sussex Coastguard, mistaking him, from the curious cut of his garments, for a determined smuggler, inflicted on his person when he disembarked on that jealously-guarded shore.*

But so it ever must be. High rents and inadequate sport will drive away the Jones's and Smiths to find in other lands those amusements that their own

* A fact that actually happened to a friend.

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country now fails to offer. Under these circumstances Brittany will probably come in for its share of visitors. Its propinquity to the old country is in its favour; and, even in the present day, there is fair scope for adventurous youth to exercise its talents. I say in the present day, because the accounts of former writers cannot be taken as a true guide. A change has come over even this unsophisticated land; and civilisation has worked wonders amongst a people who have, more than any other, steadily set their faces against it. The time for making marvellous bags and capturing fabulous amounts of salmon and trout has gone by; and, in the place of it, if the visitor will expect fair average sport, he will not be disappointed.

My plan is to give a general outline of the shooting resources of Brittany, and the manners of its inhabitants; then to point out the locality of the best rivers and the places to fish them from; and, lastly, to give a kind of connected story made up from visits to all the towns of sporting note. I must only premise, that I did not visit the places in the order named, and that I have been in some much oftener than others. But to make my story more connected, I will give my waifs and strays as the apparent result of one visit. My remarks will apply to what is commonly called "Lower Brittany;" *i.e.*, to the country west of St. Brieux, Pontivy, and Vannes. East of this line the inhabitants have for

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the most part put off their old customs: agriculture is carried on more after the Norman fashion; peasants are richer; and, last not least, the *ferœ naturæ* have receded before the advance of civilisation. This last consideration is alone sufficient to make me pass over Eastern Brittany, and confine my observations to its western neighbour.

"Hic labor, hoc opus est."

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CHAPTER II.

On reference being made to the map of the three departments, Cotes du Nord, Morbihan, and Finisterre, it will be seen that a certain range of mountains, or rather hills (for nowhere are they more than 1,500 feet above the sea level), are a prominent feature in the landscape. These are called the Menez Arres, and seem to form a large semicirle. Beginning at Moncontour in the east, and thence stretching westward, they rise parallel with St. Brieux and Guingamp. From this point they take a south-westerly direction to La Feuillee, and almost as far as Le Faou. From here again they are seen to the south of Chateaulin and Chateauneuf, and finally sink into insignificance beyond Gourin.

Within this semicirle the best shooting in Brittany is to be had; and the fishing is nearly, if not quite, as good as in the larger streams on the other side of the mountains. The Menez Arrez themselves are covered with gorse and heather, and give shelter to nothing but a sparse sprinkling of hares, rabbits, and snipes. On descending these hills at any point of the semicircle the veritable territory of the Chouans is entered, the roads, with two or three exceptions, become detest-

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able, and all traces of civilisation disappear. The arable land, the broom-fields, and tracts of Landes, look well to the sportsman's eye; but until he actually takes the field he cannot rightly judge of the difficulties attending the chase therein. Not only is the country hilly, and so necessarily fatiguing to the indifferent walker, but the difficulties of crossing it are further aggravated by the large banks which separate each enclosure. Trees or gorse generally deck the tops of these impediments, and not only compel him to slacken his onward course, but prevent the marking of game. With the exception of these obstacles, the territory of the Chouans offers unusual facilities for shooting, which I shall hereafter more fully describe. I will only say that game is much more abundant here than on the other side of the mountains. Beyond the semicircle we find the principal towns of Brittany, to wit: Guingamp, Morlaix, Brest, Landermean, &c., all connected by excellent government roads. In their neighbourhood the Landes have in a great measure disappeared, and cultivation has improved. But the worst of all is, that so numerous are the sportsmen, that after the commencement of the season a daily adjournment in a carriage to more distant hunting grounds is absolutely indispensable.

I must next turn my reader's attention to the inhabitants of Lower Brittany, whom I shall divide into several classes. First and foremost flourishes the

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Marquis of This or the Count of That, of ancient or modern date, as the case may be. Such an one will, probably, be the lord and master of some hundreds of acres; and it is next to certain that he will retain the right of shooting for himself and friends. These cases, however, are few and far between, and need hardly be taken into account. Secondly, there is a class of proprietors, whom I shall term "the absentees," who own a *very* small property, let it out unto husbandmen, pocket the rent, and care nothing about shooters and chasseurs. Of course the laws that regulate the sub-division of property in France is the cause of the existence of many little holdings, of which the rent is so small, that the proprietor, unable to make both ends meet, gladly takes employment from government at a very small salary. I know a gentleman who has four such little patches of land. He tells me that the soil is so poor, and rent so small, that he is but too glad to work for government, and receive 40*l.* per annum for downright hard work as justice of the peace. The worst part of his case, and others of his class, is, that *employés* are almost invariably sent away from their native *arrondissements*; and thus they seldom have an opportunity of looking after their bit of property. Thirdly, there is the independent farmer, who owns and cultivates his own land. I call him an independent farmer, yet he must not be compared with his brethren across the Channel, as his manner of living is more on a par with that of

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an Irish cottier, than what we call a farmer. Still he is an owner of soil, and has, probably, more francs concealed in that old chest than you or I are aware of. He is one of a capital class, and is glad to see you come with your gun, and do what you can; but all the time he is laying the flattering unction to his soul that you are killing those "*bêtes*," which would otherwise do his crops so much damage. Would that all would cherish the same idea. Fourthly, there are the renters of small farms, whom I must divide into two classes. The first, and by far the most numerous, are those who care not for the game, or who comes to shoot it. The second is the genuine poacher on everybody's land as well as his own, the setter of snares, the watcher of partridges when calling at early morn or dewy eve, and the most inveterate hater of all who intrude on his miserable acres. With respect to these gentry I have only one piece of advice to give. Should you meet one, let "forward" be the word, leave his territory at once,—a thing easily done, as three or four fields will probably be the extent of his allotment. Lastly, there is the land owned by the *Communes*, on which each inhabitant has a right of pasturage. This is open ground, as well as the government property, which chiefly consists of woods. The latter is frequently let to individuals, for the preservation of roe-deer, &c., a fact that can easily be ascertained by application to the landlords of inns.

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From this it will be seen that the country people are mostly in our favour. I wish I could say the same of the inhabitants of the small towns, whom I shall divide into three classes. First, there is the upper class and the *employés*, who take out a license, talk much, and do little, and who will not, I think, require further notice. Secondly, there are the *ouvriers*, or mechanics, and shopkeepers, who turn every Sunday and holiday to account. Remember, that with few exceptions, none of these are your friends. They have occasionally met with Englishmen, seen their guns, dogs, and shooting paraphernalia, and drawn curious conclusions from the vapouring of some of them. They hear that all shooting is preserved in England; hence they advise every peasant to warn us off, giving as a reason, that he (the peasant) would not be allowed to shoot were he to be in England. Then they see the bags we sometimes make, and in their jealousy make representations to any influential proprietor whom they may find to listen to them. Often have they tried to induce me to sell my game. Crafty as they were, they never succeeded, and luckily for me too, for nothing rouses the ire of the peasants so much as this, and if any Englishman practises it, he will most assuredly be warned off every farm in the country. I remember, a French gentleman said to me one day at dinner, "We are very happy to see you here to shoot, but you must not make a *commerce* of what you kill."

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The less one sees of this class of sportsmen (?) the better; and the less *they know of your proceedings*, the better for your peace of mind and eventual success. The third and last class, are the professional shooters, who make a living out of what they kill. They are miserably poor, and are what the Bretons call *les pauvres malheureux*. One of these will always prove the best guide to a stranger, for which he ought not to receive more than two francs per diem. He ought to be prevented from carrying a gun, as his old weapon has been known ere this "to shoot round a corner."

The shooting season opens at different times in the three departments. The exact time depends mainly upon the harvest, which, if backward, prevents the *chasse* being opened so soon as it would in the case of an early season. The Prefet fixes the exact day from statistics, it is said, received from each department. In the department of Finisterre it generally commences earlier than in the others; and some day between the 1st and 7th of September is usually selected. In the Cotes du Nord, and Morbihan, it generally opens on some day between the 10th and 16th of the same month. For the first three weeks the sport is rather precarious, as the buck-wheat is at that time uncut. The birds on being disturbed generally take refuge therein; and no quarter would be given should sportsmen or dog attempt to follow them. The hares likewise cling to

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this cover, as long as there is any on the ground. By the 28th of September this, in ordinary years, will be removed, and the very cream of the shooting may be had for about three weeks. My advice is to make hay while the sun shines, and prosecute the *chasse* during this period with all becoming ardour, as no such good opportunity will again present itself. On the 20th of October, or thereabouts, the husbandman reappears plough in hand, and straightway disturbs the birds early in the morning, long before we put in an appearance on the scene. Nevertheless, although the birds are scared by the peasantry digging and singing in every sixth field, fair sport may still be had in the Landes and broom-fields. By the commencement of November all the corn is sown, the peasantry are removed, and average sport may be enjoyed to the end of the season; for the birds are seldom wild except before or after very bad weather. They have certainly a very unpleasant habit of running, when apprehensive of danger, which baffles the dogs, and is very efficacious in saving their lives. They are very fond of the new sown fields; but there is a vulgar prejudice among the peasantry, to the effect that the human foot does damage to the young wheat. Hence, it is as well to have a dog that is fleet of foot to scour such fields; and, should he get a point, you may safely risk the farmer's wrath, cross the field, and take the shot.

After the 10th of November partridge-shooting is

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but of secondary consideration. As near as possible to that day the first grand flight of woodcocks visits the interior (of course, in the woods near the sea, they are found earlier); and then my system has always been as follows. I take the wind, having first selected the best woods, according to the state of the weather. I then shoot my way across country, and, with luck, pick up some birds and snipe. Having beaten the woods selected, I return by some other way. Not that I have ever managed to bag more than three couple of cock in one day; but I always find that two or three woodcocks and a happy balance of birds and snipe are quite sufficient to give me ample amusement. At all events it is quite enough to carry; for this constitutes my chief difficulty. If I take a man with me, nothing can prevent him bragging and talking about what his master has done in every Inn in the country. This has done me so much harm, and at times rendered the native *chasseurs* so jealous, that I now never take any one with me, but just dispose of the game about my person as best I can.

I must add a few words about the different kinds of game that are to be found throughout the country. There are three kinds of partridge,—the red, the grey, and the rocket. The red birds, detested in Norfolk, but loved in France, as commanding a higher price, do not increase in the same proportion as in England. There is, however, a fair sprinkling of them, and

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they exercise their running tactics after the manner of their English brethren. The common grey bird is found everywhere. The rocket is nothing more than the mountain partridge; and its race, from some unaccountable reason, seems to be gradually dying out. Carhaix was once a good quarter for them; there they are now nearly extinct. Gourin and two or three other places are still honoured by their presence. There are a good many quails near St. Brieux, and other spots near the sea; but in the interior they are very scarce. Ducks, teal, and widgeon breed in and visit the streams and lakes; near St. Pol, Lezardrieux, Landerneau, &c. (all on the sea), they are abundant. An average number of snipe are scattered about the country, but, with the exception of three or four famous bogs, they seem to show a greater preference to Landes and broom-fields than to swamps. There are plenty of wood-cocks in the winter time; and with respect to wild boars (subjects of many a fable), wolves, and roe-deer, I shall have to say more hereafter.

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CHAPTER III.

NEXT I come to a most important, but at the same time most delicate point, viz.: what sort of dog I ought to recommend for general purposes. In nothing, perhaps, is the old adage, viz.: "that every man thinks his own geese to be swans," more completely carried out than in the matter of dogs. Almost every man, French or English, has what he considers to be the best animal in his town or department. No matter whether he is slow, leggy, under-bred, or anything else equally disadvantageous, his master will think him perfection, and praise him as such. It thus appears to me very difficult to recommend any particular sort, as all who have dogs of other kinds would immediately ignore the selection. If, however, I had to select the brace of dogs best adapted for every kind of shooting throughout the season, I should, without hesitation, prefer a brace of well-broken spaniels; but, as no dogs are more difficult to obtain, and I have just a sneaking affection for an animal with a little more dash than the aforesaid breed, I have tried the following cross with success. I have put a spaniel to a well-bred

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setter bitch, and been lucky enough to combine the ranging qualities of the latter and the hunting perseverance of the former. The French have tried this cross very frequently. I lately purchased one of the produce; and I can say that few dogs perform better in the field than this one. My reason for discarding pointers is, that they are too thin-skinned for the work required in Landes for partridge-shooting, and are of little use, as every one knows, for cover-shooting. For the hares and rabbits nothing would be better than half-a-dozen Sussex beagles, with which capital sport can be had from the 1st of October to the end of the season. Beagling is the great amusement of the natives. It just suits their mode of action, or *in*action it might be called, when they take up a position on a high bank, pipe in mouth, and let fly at all that comes in their way.

The feeding of dogs is an important consideration for any one who intends making a lengthened stay in Brittany. The natives feed theirs with black bread, moistened with the washings of plates and dishes. This diet heats the blood, and causes an eruption of the skin. We found, besides, that our dogs, when fed on bread alone, soon became deficient in strength and muscle. We now give them oatmeal, boiled in English fashion, three times a week, and the black bread on other days. The difference in their health and appearance, since we made the change, is most marked. By the bye, this oatmeal,

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diluted in milk, is the daily food of the better class of peasant; so there is no difficulty in obtaining it.

The subject of powder, caps, and certificate demands a little attention. It is an understood thing in England that French powder is next to useless. Wonderful stratagems are consequently used, and dust thrown into the eyes of the Custom-house officials by gentlemen importing their Curtis and Harvey. I cannot help thinking that much of this trouble is thrown away, as the quality of French powder has of late years much improved. The best kinds are certainly expensive, viz.: five and six shillings per pound. Both of these are good enough as regards strength. With respect to cleanliness, they are inferior to English; still, as there is seldom sufficient shooting to make a gun very foul, this latter consideration is not of much account. The risks of smuggling gunpowder are great; independently of which inconvenience I look at that proceeding in another point of view. The sale of powder is a Government monopoly, and a source of large income to the State. All of us, perfect strangers, come over, and, without asking permission, shoot where we like, and, as strangers, are not called upon to pay *direct* taxes in any shape. In such a case I hardly think it right to defraud the Government of almost the only contribution we sportsmen are required to make. Now, in the matter of caps, it is quite a different affair. French caps are very thin, and, consequently, quite

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useless in damp weather. They "fly," too, very frequently: and if you have strong locks (the case with most English guns) a portion of the cap is often driven into the nipple, and causes much trouble and delay. Until somebody in France will imitate Eley's method, I am afraid that not even the preaching of Jonah will prevent us smuggling our own caps from England.

A certificate, or *permis*, costs just one pound sterling. A short note must be addressed to the mayor, on a piece of stamped paper, asking for a *permis de chasse*. The bureau of the "precepteur" must next be hunted out, and the sovereign paid to him. This functionary will give you a receipt, which must be taken to the mayor. In a few days the necessary document, signed by the prefet of the department, will be forthcoming. In a large town it is easy enough to procure this certificate; in the villages they are not so ready to give it to a stranger. Some years ago English were obliged to qualify as lucifer match merchants, or members of some other trade, before they were considered fit people to receive it. This is altered now: and but little difficulty will be found in procuring this necessary document.

It will not here, perhaps, be out of place to give the different routes by which a traveller can reach Brittany. The most expensive, but most expeditious, is by railway from London to Paris, and

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from thence by rail again to Rennes. From the latter place there are malle-postes and diligences to Lamballe in the north, and Vannes in the south. All the *désagrémens* of a long sea voyage are of course avoided by this route. The next is by steam from Southampton to Havre (three times a week), and from thence by steam again (three times a week, fare eighteen shillings,) to Morlaix, in the department of Finisterre. The third and last is viâ Jersey, whence there are packets three times a week to St. Malo (fare eight shillings). There are sailing vessels twice a week from Jersey to Portrieux, in the Cotes du Nord, twenty-two miles from Guingamp; but in bad weather I recommend every one to avoid them. Although the passage from Havre to Morlaix is performed in twenty hours and by fine steamers, should a westerly wind blow up Channel the voyage will be hardly agreeable to people who suffer from sea-sickness.

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CHAPTER IV.

In giving an outline of the fishing resources of Brittany, I must ask the reader a second time to forget all the marvellous stories he may have heard or read. In former days, no doubt trout were constantly taken that equalled in weight those in an English nobleman's preserve. Sea-trout, before the netting system came so much into fashion, were to be caught by the dozen near the mouths of the rivers and streams. Servants, according to that oft-told tale, yet true withal, may have universally made terms with their masters, rejecting salmon as an article of diet more than at the most three times a week: that was no doubt a fine time for the amateur angler. But tempora mutantur; and in even the most uncivilised districts such a state of things no longer exists.

Since the first revolution, when all the rivers in France were thrown open to the public, or rather more strictly speaking to the wielders of the *ligne volante*, the lower classes have gradually become more and more enlightened as to the value of fish. They soon found that trout realized a fair price in

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the market towns, and at all the hotels, and, later on, since the introduction of railways, that the Parisians would take and pay handsomely for any amount of salmon. No wonder that the poorest of the land became professional anglers, and that they soon became acquainted with all the deadliest methods of destroying fish. They learnt to wield the spear, though the law especially forbids them so to do. They learnt to build up cruives; and if any salmon escaped these twin dangers, the nets of some small proprietor higher up the river were warily set for him. They found that night-lines were infallible for catching trout; and there is, in consequence, scarcely a river in Brittany where they are not used. They discovered that hand-nets were useful to capture any unfortunates who lingered in the shallows during the dry summer months. They learned to fish passing well; and though their fly was but an indifferent imitation of the insect, its colour was correct, and so answered the purpose. They soon became acquainted with the art of dabbing and spinning a minnow, and discovered that grasshoppers and crickets were the most effective bait. Even in salmon-fishing they took hints from roving Englishmen; and amongst the ranks of Breton anglers may now be found some who quite equal their instructors. Add to this, that manufactories have been built, which in some cases have poisoned the water, in others have prevented the salmon

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ascending the stream where once they were abundant; that the largest rivers have been turned into canals, useless for the transport of merchandise (for nobody uses them), as nearly so for fishing; and I have come to the last of the several reasons why Brittany rivers have lost the high character they once enjoyed.

I must now proceed to enquire *how far* all these drawbacks have contributed to the diminution of sport. Salmon-angling is the amusement most affected by the change; so much so, that I consider it almost a farce for a *stranger* to attempt it. If a resident gentleman, who knows every stone and every place where a fish (if there is one in the river) will lie, considers himself lucky when he catches his eight or ten salmon in the season, what chance can a stranger have who just drops down on a river for a week's angling? Supposing that the weather is in his favour, the water in good order (which five times out of six it is not), and the right flies mounted, he will not, except by chance, fish the best places in quick succession for the simple reason that he does not know them, and will hardly find a jealous native to show them to him. For when salmon are not plentiful in a river it is, of course, absolutely necessary to fish the best places *only;* and these none but the *habitués* can know. To show how scarce the fish have become, I have only to state that the best take by an individual during the last three years, in any

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one season, amounted but to twenty-six; and of these I know several were taken with the worm. I have no doubt that the laws will shortly be made more stringent, or rather that the present regulations will be more strictly enforced, when Brittany will again be a great place for the salmon-angler to visit. In the meantime there are only three or four places that I can safely recommend as containing plenty of fish, and not unfairly dealt with. For information respecting these spots, I must refer the reader to my account of all the sporting rendezvous in Brittany; and he will be able to select from it that which most takes his fancy.

The sport of trout-fishing has not yet come to such an untimely end; albeit the poor fish have, as an Irishman would say, "a power of enemies." Amongst these I include otters (the animal), night-lines, hand-nets, worm-fishing, fly-fishing, night fishing (with the white moth), and pike in some places. In point of fact, every method of destruction threatens them, except *wholesale netting*. By wholesale netting I mean dragging the rivers with a seine. Now, I have on my side the opinion of an eminent Scotch fisherman, who, speaking more particularly of the tributaries of the Tweed, affirms that, no matter how many anglers there may be, using every kind of fly and bait, no perceptible diminution of the trout will take place. He even goes so far as to say that a few night-lines would not materially diminish their numbers (?)

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"But, if a river is repeatedly dragged," he says, "you may bid adieu to sport until such practice is discontinued." From my experience of the Brittany rivers, I can fully bear out the correctness of this opinion in the main; for whether the authorities could not or would not wink at such an infraction of the law, or whether the country people are too ignorant or too poor to buy a drag-net, I do not know. All I am sure of is, that that dangerous implement is but seldom used. The hand-nets used in the summer in the shallows do no great damage, and can hardly be classed under the head of "wholesale netting." The general preservation of the trout may be ascribed to the mills (not the mill*ers*), that succeed each other very rapidly on every river and petty stream. The reservoir above each of these often extends as far as half a mile; and to this the fish descend in hot weather. A good breeding stock is thus maintained. The miller has an eye to his own interest, and will seldom, if ever, draw off all this water, as he well knows that in that case he would lose the profits of several days' grinding. No doubt if this individual thought it worth his while, in point of fact, thought that he could take a few salmon out of his pool, his conscience would never stand in the way of his making the attempt.

With regard to the night-lines, few rivers are now free from them. The plan of setting them is so simple, that the peasantry have readily adopted it

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for the purpose of making a few *sous*. It is only this class that can do it. If a professional fisherman attempted to do so, the chances are, that ere he could arrive in the morning to take them up, his lines would be stolen by the peasants. That it is quite a modern invention, I can prove from the case of that beautiful little river Elers, which flows through the centre of unsophisticated Brittany. Three years ago, it was seldom that a line was wetted in that swift stream, save when a *very very* roving Englishman, passing that way, took compassion on its solitude. As to night-lines, such a thing was never dreamt of till a scoundrel from Chateauneuf pitched his tents among the simple population. He stayed there, each year, during the forty days of Lent, set his lines, and reaped a good harvest from the quantities of fish he sent to his native town. Now, the peasants have caught the infection, and commence, as the sporting landlord at La Feuillée said, to "*abimer*" that river.

I can easily fancy some one being now inclined to ask, "Why, if all these practices are discountenanced by law, do you not hire and preserve a river for yourself and friends?" It is quite possible so to act and, in this way only, can the English residents preserve a few salmon pools for their own angling. They do not hire the river, but the exclusive use of the banks. But this will not prevent another person fishing, if he chooses to *enter* the water for that purpose. The law gives every one the right to fish with the fly

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wherever he pleases: it is no trespass on your property if a person simply *walks into the water* and fishes your best runs. A salmon pool, even at the edge, will probably be too deep, or, perhaps, contain a trifle too much mud to allow of wading and fishing with any fair prospect of success; but your trout runs, being comparatively shallow and easily waded, are at the mercy of every one who chooses to wet his feet. Supposing, again, you have hired the banks of a river for the whole length of its course, and have it properly guarded by a competent watcher, you catch your poacher, and attempt to get a conviction. Here is the old difficulty. No matter how intimate you may be with the procureur imperial; no matter how many promises you may have had from a justice of the peace; in nine out of ten of the most villainous cases of poaching your prisoner will escape. The fact is, the authorities look upon fishing as a means of subsistence for the lower classes. If the latter are debarred from this, they and their richer brethren will be taxed for their support. So the law of expediency is of far more importance in the eyes of our Gallic neighbours, than the maintenance of those edicts that they are supposed to uphold. Supposing, after an infinity of trouble, you get a conviction, and the illegal fisherman is sent to prison, a still more curious circumstance happens, as the chances are that the offender has not a shilling he can call his own. In this case the authorities politely request

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you to pay for his maintenance while in prison; and, on your refusing to do so, the prisoner is let loose more determined than ever to do you an injury. No, I think hiring a river is a fallacy, not only for the reasons given above, but on account of the bad feeling which the natives will feel towards you, a stranger and an Englishman, for depriving them of their natural means of subsistence. Better far to wander from river to river, taking everything as it comes, with contented mind and spirit; and you may rest assured that in all your piscatorial essays, you will find the evil counterbalanced by the good.

The anglers that will be met with in a tour throughout the country, generally belong to the lowest classes. A French gentleman seldom wastes his time by the murmuring stream. Unless he can land his fish by the dozen in a net, he gives no countenance to the sport, and, in the opinion of an eminent writer, cares nothing about it, for this reason. There is no *éclat* attendant on "*la pêche*," no "blowing of horns and astonishing the natives; it is "too quiet and unpretending for him. The eyes of the "many will not be fixed on him, however successful; "so he eschews it, and leaves the amusement to his "more needy brethren." Amongst these are the genuine professionals, who sell all they catch, and who generally constitute themselves purveyors-in-general to some Inn. They know pretty well what they are about, and although their tackle may be truly called

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primitive, it is very effective. As fishing requires but little outlay of capital, it is a favourite pursuit; more so than shooting, since the latter requires a *porte d'armes*, powder, shot, and gun, all attended by a disbursement of capital. The *bourgeois* like a day's "outing" on the banks of a river, but only select holidays and Sundays for their amusement. They are anything but *artistes*, and prefer the float and worm to the more difficult system of throwing a fly. In consequence of this comparative paucity of fishermen, one seldom finds that the river has been fished by some person in advance. And to me the great charm of fishing in Brittany consists in being able to go out and fish wherever I like, with but little chance of discovering a native angler before me, who has, perhaps, been whipping away since daybreak, and will in spite of me continue to take my water, however far I may walk for the purpose of avoiding him.

The trout-fishing season may be said to commence about the middle of February. The arrival of "the duns" (in this case welcome enough) is sufficient warning to the angler to be up and doing, and, even thus early, fair sport may be had. Still, during this month and that of March, the rapids and falls do not afford much sport. The water being so much colder there than in the still water below, is the chief reason why the fish do not rise so readily. April and May, as in other countries, are decidedly the best months. By the middle of June, the farmers begin

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to cry out if you enter their grass fields, which is rather aggravating when the May fly is on. The hay will be removed by about the end of the first week in July (the hay harvest is very late in Brittany), when, the rivers will be so low, that fish can only be caught by dabbing with grasshopper and cricket; but at this time the fish are very wary, and, moreover, betake themselves to curious places to escape the effects of the flax, which the natives steep in the water, and therewith nearly poison the trout.

I will now add a list of the most useful flies.

The Yellow Dun (yellow body, red hackle, starling's wing).

Blue Dun.

"Devonshire" Dun (green body, ribbed with straw twist, and starling's wing).

The Grantham.

The Black Hackle (with and without silver twist).

The Alder.

The Downhill (orange body, ribbed with peacock's tail, and woodcock's wing).

March Browns on No. 6, 7, 8 hooks.

Red Palmer on 7 hook.

Orange body and thin black hackle.

Red body and thin black hackle.

The Francis

May flies ad libitum.

All these are common flies, and have been made up very often by Charles Farlow, in the Strand, for

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special fishing in Brittany. I could add more, but I think, even in the matter of flies, that "enough is as good as a feast," and that, if trout would not look at any of the foregoing, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they would object to rise at anything.

I think I have now said everything that is necessary, previous to giving an account of my travels. To that I refer my readers for the description of the best places, and all information appertaining thereunto; and the hints I am about to give are all the more necessary, as we can depend on nothing we hear from Frenchmen, or Bretons, on sporting subjects. If a Frenchman knows anything about the fishing in a certain river, he adds to and multiplies the number and size of the trout in such a degree as to prevent any sane person giving him a hearing. If he never saw this same river, he is too proud to admit his ignorance, and will proceed to dose you with a number of myths, which he has gathered from some third party. For instance, if I am at Chateaulin in the south, some wandering bagman comes in and gives such an account of the salmon-fishing at Lannion in the north, as to make me think it useless to spend any more time at the former place. On arriving at Lannion, I find that if the amount of captured salmon named by my former friend had been divided by three, it would have been nearer the mark; and my new informant immediately goes on to tell about some wonderful fishing at Quimperlé. It is needless to add

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that I afterwards find that his descriptions are equally deceptive. I remember once, two Frenchmen, who ought to have known better, told me that Plestein, Daoulas, and Pont de Buis, were three of the best places for the *pêche au saumon*. I afterwards found them to be the very worst I could have visited. A Breton cannot give you information; his ignorance on most points is extraordinary. Hence I may say *"gare aux"* stories—turn a deaf ear to the myths that are circulated at table d'hôtes and cafés, and, only hoping that I may never fall into the same error, I will proceed to lay my narrative before my readers.

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CHAPTER V.

The south of France and the Pyrenees may have many advantages to offer the casual visitor, but, amongst the number, that of sporting can hardly be included. He may, perhaps, see enough woodcocks in winter to make him wish for more; and in spring he may catch a few little trout, and think what excellent sport he might have, if the netting system was abolished. Such a state of things hardly satisfied certain veterans who had collected in the beautiful town of Pau in the winter of 185—; so, they abstained from the *chasse* and the *pêche*, and contented themselves with retailing anecdotes respecting their achievements in other lands. One had enjoyed the privilege (?) of shooting in Prussian battues; another had been honoured with invitations to old baronial halls in the Tyrol and Hungary; while a third, more daring than his brethren, had penetrated far into Africa viâ Algiers, and been on remarkably intimate terms with the large game of that truly arid and uninviting country. But none of the places, that they described, had such charms for me as Brittany, whose glories were loudly chanted by

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French and English alike; so much so, indeed, that I made up my mind to pay it a visit. At this juncture I met a sturdy little piscator, who was on the point of setting out for La Belle Bretagne, and who promised to favour me shortly with his notions respecting its capabilities. Three weeks elapsed, when the following letter (copied verbatim) came to hand:—

"Napoleonville, Morbihan.

"Dear ——,

"According to your request I enclose half-a-dozen flies of the same pattern as committed such havoc in the Bidassoa; that they have not done as much here you will gather from what I have to say in this letter. This is, without exception, the most miserable country I have ever seen. The inhabitants are barbarians—not fine, sharp fellows such as old Herodotus loved to describe, but a dirty, ignorant, drunken set; they do not speak French, but a kind of cross between Welsh and Irish. The accommodation at some of the inns in the large towns is tolerable; in the smaller, detestable. The "feeding" is not good, as witness the daily bill of fare:—Boiled water with bread in it, which they call soup; bouilli; a greasy ragout; and tough veal, with, perhaps, the delicate addition of seed biscuits and apples; and if you cannot drink cider, sour wine, and execrable eau-de-vie, you must try the "cold water system." The women are positively hideous;

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in fact, they resemble those images in the Noah's arks, that have no waists, but the same depth of girth from their shoulders down to their feet. The fishing (at this season) is a dead letter, as the rivers are low, and such trout as they do catch are taken in hand-nets. I don't believe in the accounts they give of the shooting, as my setters found but few birds when the landlord took me to what he called the "*plus beau pays de chasse.*" Be wise, and do not come here. You will regret it if you do, as much as

"Yours very truly."

This cannot be called an encouraging epistle, yet it did not make me alter my intention of going Brittany-ward; and I am, moreover, very glad I received it, as it prepared me for the worst, and prevented any disappointment I might otherwise have felt.

I pass over my long railway journey from Dax to Bordeaux, and thence to Nantes, as likewise that by diligence from Nantes to Vannes. It is at this latter place that I had my first introduction to the genuine Brittany diligence, whose seats are cramped and uncomfortable, and whose pace varies from four to five miles per hour. So, happy the man who has his own carriage to take him from Vannes to Napoleonville née Pontivy; otherwise, he will be guilty of much bad language when he witnesses, for the first time, the crab-like performance of the public conveyance. Hungry and cold I was after seven

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hours consumed in travelling some thirty-five miles, and happy, indeed, to be set down at last in the ancient town of Pontivy. The name of this poor faded town was changed to Napoleonville by the First Emperor, when he tacked on some new public buildings, and built some staring barracks, with the intention of making it the capital, as it was the centre, of Brittany. It now resembled the outskirts of one of our large towns, where carcases of houses have been run up and left unfinished, and where large thoroughfares have been made for carriages that do not run therein. It was just such a place as might give a visitor like myself, just fresh from the splendours of Bordeaux and Nantes, a fit of the horrors, or, at least, a wish to return to civilisation. Even the present Emperor, on paying it a visit last year, took compassion on its forlorn appearance, and promised to fill its halls with the retinue of a prefet, and make it the chief town of a new department. We piscators humbly wished he could *un*canalise the Blavet, in former times, such a splendid fishing river, but which, in its present dirty and stagnant state, is but of little use to us wielders of the rod. But, although there is no fishing at the door,—*i.e.* at Pontivy itself,—I found that I was in the neighbourhood of an excellent little river, and that there was a daily public conveyance to the very part where there were most fish. This was about nine miles to the south-west, and is marked in the map as Melrund.

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The river flowed through that little village, and the contents of its limpid waters have been the subject of panegyric to others before me. I could not quite coincide in all they have said respecting it; but I will allow that is well worthy of a visit. On the good old system of "looking before leaping," —good as regards fishing, but not equally so with respect to hunting,—I, on my first visit, ascended the stream to mark the best spots for a first essay. Above the village I alighted on three deep and likely pools, whose still surface was occasionally stirred by some ascending head in pursuit of a fly; and from glimpses of a broad tail I could see that the said head did not belong to an unworthy specimen of the trout genus. Above, I found plenty of running water, but rather too shallow. The holes and places of refuge were few and far between, and their absence must augur badly for the welfare of the fish in the dry summer months. And so, after a march of two miles, when I put my rod together, I found my prognostications verified, as they (the rapids) were anything but productive of sport; and until I came to the afore-mentioned pools, nothing but small fry had risen to the fly. A breeze had now sprung up, when my March brown was most kindly received, and a fish that weighed a pound and a half, the hero of the day, was afterwards pronounced by the Boniface of the Inn, to be a fair specimen of what could be taken at that particular place. Be that as it may, I was well satisfied

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with my performance, when, after two hours' amusement, I quitted the scene with ten brace of average trout. Two or three hundred yards out of Melrund a stone bridge crosses the river. Below this, the water looked most promising, being chiefly in the form of currents on a gravelly bed. There were, however, very few deep holes, and no mills from a little way below this bridge to where the river joined the canal of the Blavet, which might have been perhaps about two miles' distant. I fished this with some success; but I am confident that better sport is to be obtained in the three upper pools than in all the lower water.

The hotel fare was not to be despised, nor were its four-post beds, and (at times) white dimity curtains, altogether uninviting. As to the landlord, I am sure he was not found wanting in either length of tongue or general activity. On him devolved the duties of the post-office, excise arrangements, and tax-collecting; and, as if these were not sufficient, he managed the Inn and a tallow-chandler's shop, to the satisfaction of the inhabitants. On Sundays, I regret to say, he closes his shop and bureau, and carries his net to my three favourite pools, whence he extracts, so he says, victims as long as his arm (?), and refers me to Pontivy for his character of *le plus grand pecheur de la Bretagne*. I took comfort from the winks and shrugs of a *commis voyageur*, who was present, and who told me quietly there was not such

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another person in the country who could boast and tell stories like him. He invited me to inspect the mysteries of his cabinet up-stairs, and such an olla podrida of gut and hooks, as clearly proved that he must have been "in the thick of it," ere the pleasure of auditing accounts, &c., became more attractive, and the source of greater emolument. However, the moth had invaded his trunks and settled on his treasure; even the gut he gave me would not have held a vigorous minnow. Then he offered me his card of permission to fish the dingy waters of the Blavet, and which I was to exhibit to the so-called conservators of the canal; but without that precious document I have always descended thereto, and angled without let or hindrance. But as pike and perch have no charms for me, I am sure I shall leave the canal to the loquacious denizens of la belle France. This little Inn is not extravagant in its charges; for 3*s.* 6*d.* per diem friend Boniface will supply everything that is needful.

On my return to Pontivy, I allowed the setters to range over the best country in the neighbourhood, but, I am sorry to say, without much success. The deficiency of game is mainly to be attributed to the facility with which partridges and hares can now be forwarded to Nantes, and even Paris. The peasants in consequence shoot and snare what they can, and sell to the conductors of diligences and malle postes. The latter gentry make a very considerable addition

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to their incomes by the purchases thus effected. I wiled away much time at Pontivy in putting questions, to every one I met, on the subject of shooting and fishing throughout Brittany. How properly I was taken in by those good gossips! They knew as much about their own country as they might about the interior of China; still, they did not hesitate to cram me with a succession of myths, the nature of which I was shortly to find out. Their accounts led me to think that every forest swarmed with roe-deer and wild boars, that every river teemed with salmon, and that partridges, to use their favourite expression, were to be found *en masse*. The old line, "credat Judæus non ego," did not then occur to me so often as now. So I, believing their tales, straightway paid my five francs a day, the sum demanded by my landlady for her accommodation (which, when I compared it with what I found elsewhere, I think my correspondent libelled), and started again on my voyage of discovery. At the same time I inwardly resolved not to visit Napoleonville again, *i.e.*, if on "sporting thoughts intent;"—a piece of advice I strongly recommend to those whom it may concern.

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CHAPTER VI.

WESTWARD ho! was my direction, an antediluvian two-horse chaise my conveyance, the hamlet of Rosternen, some twenty five miles distant, my destination. The road is a portion of that which connects Pontivy with Brest. It is ninety miles in length, very hilly, but kept in good repair, and traverses from east to west *the very cream of the shooting country*. My driver did not hurry either himself or horses, but considered a maximum speed of five miles an hour quite fast enough for safety or business. I thus had an opportunity of "seeing the country," which an anti-railwayite always sets forth as the great charm of the old coaching system. To-day, however, there was a sameness about the scenery that would have made a railway preferable. For miles I saw, little else but, heather and stunted gorse; and only here and there appeared a cluster of miserable cottages, with just half a dozen cultivated fields attached—a sort of oasis in the desert. There was a fair sprinkling of the so-called Druidical stones, and, if in olden times those excellent priests did sacrifice thereupon, they must frequently have contracted an unpleasant cold, on these bleak

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bare hills. Whenever I see one of these "Menhirs," I cannot help thinking of the Breton peasant's favourite picture of "the Druid sacrificing," which, pasted against the walls of their cottages, keeps company with that of "the Procession at Auray," and "the Wandering Jew." The painter has enveloped the dear old man in a white sheet, and placed a mitre most jauntily on his head; while the village Raphael has painted his flowing locks a light green, given his face and shoes a vermilion hue, and made him altogether more like a clown out of luck than one of the sacerdotal order. The rain came down in true Brittany fashion as I entered the small village of Rosternen, and with difficulty kept my seat in the rickety chaise, as it stumbled over the rough uneven pavement.

Verily, if you would see this village aright, it ought not to be visited on such a wet morning as this. In fine weather, even, it is almost inferior in beauty to Callac, La Feuillée, Commana, and id genus omne, whose glories remain to be set forth; but on a damp day the less said about its outward signs the better. That no eulogium can be passed upon its Inn, may be gathered from the following facts. The apartment dévoted to the two Brittany meals, was about twelve feet long by five in breadth. A grocer's shop, with all its tallowy odours, was in the foreground; the kitchen with its wretched culinary appointments is opposite to, and parallel with, the salle-à-manger. To-day, the table-cloth, though dirty, has not been removed or

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shaken, since it did service at some commis-voyageur's breakfast at ten a.m. The landlady took me up-stairs and exhibited a bed-room, which, she informed me with some pride, served as the resting place for an Englishman, wife and child, for a whole week. As I looked at that dirt-begrimed window, I imagined, to myself, what views of life the poor lady must have formed, with that street to look out upon, and those dirty panes to see through. "He was a great sportsman," remarked the landlady. Perhaps, the furtherance of her husband's pleasure in some measure reconciled her to her fate. After the contemplation of the bandbox bedroom, I descended to the kitchen, and am invited to inspect two partridges that the landlady has bought from some poacher, who is given to sporting before the legitimate season has commenced. She cannot divine that nothing is more likely than this to create disgust in the breast of every right thinking sportsman. Her argument, as well as that of her sisterhood, is as follows:—

Every sporting gentleman shoots for the pleasure of having partridges to eat:

You are a sporting gentleman:

Therefore you shoot for the pleasure of having partridges to eat.

No amount of reasoning would show them the fallacy of the argument. Of all the sporting places in Brittany, Rosternen is the only one in which I could not make any lengthened stay. It required

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more than ordinary courage to face the discomforts of that hostelry, when the howling winds did blow, and when even the chimney-corner offered no protection against drafts and cold. I did find out in two casual visits that the shooting was good, especially, when, towards the end of the season the cock had collected in the large woods, and when the wild fowl, during a frost, visited the lakes. The latter I visited, before the dry season of 1858 had wrought such damage, when such quantities of fish were killed in the autumn months. I am afraid that it will take years to bring the pike up to their former size and numbers. On this occasion I did not long occupy the room formerly rented by the Englishman and his belongings. I rather hastily quitted the scene (having previously paid the landlady three shillings a-day for her accommodation) as I was anxious to be in time for the opening of the *chasse* in a country, which I had been especially recommended to visit.

Between this and Carhaix (twelve miles) a vehicle of curious colour and proportions carries the Emperor's mails, and has room for one passenger and a moderate amount of baggage. But as a matter of course it left Rosternen at the uncomfortable hour of two a.m. So I again hired a carriage that would start, at any time, the succeeding morning. Had I been less strange to the country, I should have known that the fat proprietor of the carriage made me pay very dearly

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for my whistle when he charged me twelve francs for the trip. Had I given him eight, it would have been quite enough; and this, I think, is a good place to say a word anent these carriages and their drivers. As the supply of diligences is hardly equal to the demand, on even the principal high roads of Brittany, and, on the less frequented routes do not run at all; the traveller is compelled to engage these private vehicles whenever he changes his place of residence. So often have I been disappointed in not finding places in the diligences, or malle postes, that I have, in one trip, actually been obliged to travel two hundred miles in these carriages *du pays*. In all the large towns the proprietors of these vehicles (some of two, some of one-horse power) are always on the look-out, near the principal hotel, for their victims. In the small villages I must find the abodes of the drivers; and if their horses are not at plough, the owners may be prevailed on to make the journey. In the former places, the proprietor no sooner sees me descend from the diligence than, recognising a victim from a distant view of old Murray's red binding, he pounces upon me, and, like a fly about a horse's ear, never leaves me. On finding out my destination, he offers to take me thither for a third more money than he intends to take. I put on an air of supreme indifference, and hint that I know a party who will take me for such a price. Proprietor is jealous, and comes to terms.

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Half-an-hour after, he and I, are jogging along the road and confidentially conversing as though no such bargain-striking and controversy had ever taken place. I know that, for six shillings, I ought always to obtain a one-horse chaise to take me twenty miles; and, for eight shillings, that I ought to have two nags, and so on in proportion to distance. I also know that, the earlier I start in the morning, the better bargain I ought to make, as then, the drivers are sure to be able to return to their native places the same day. The great saving in a pecuniary point of view, is, to find a "return carriage," *i.e.* one that has brought a party in the morning from the same place, as that, to which you are bent. Then the cost of the journey is very small. I also know well that if I have dogs and much baggage, it costs less to travel by private carriage than by malle poste. The reason of this is, that the conductors of the latter have no fixed tariff for dogs, but may charge almost what they like. I always found the drivers a well conducted class of men, and well satisfied with a franc for a *pour-boire;* a Frenchman seldom gives more than half that sum.

On leaving Rosternen I found the same wild-looking country on both sides of the road, but the broom-fields in greater profusion than heretofore. On the right, and half-way between Rosternen and Carhaix, I saw the little village of Mezle-Carhaix,

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which demands a moment's notice on account of the peculiarity with respect to the shooting. Plenty of game is to be found in its commune, the only drawback to the prosecution of the sport being the animosity of some of the farmers. This arises from the conduct of certain officious *gens d'armes*, who, not content with snapping up unlicensed shooters, have gone so far as to search the farmers' houses for game. The peasantry are naturally irate, and say, that if they may not kill their game, they will at least prevent other people doing so. So, strangers are sometimes annoyed by the sudden advent of belligerent cultivators, armed with hoes and spades, whose anger they find it difficult to appease. This may, however, be done by a Breton guide, whose services would be amply remunerated with two francs per diem. About a mile and a half from Carhaix I entered the department of Finisterre, and shortly after arrived at that ancient town.

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CHAPTER VII.

THERE was high change that day in Carhaix: that is, it was a market day of no ordinary consequence. The streets were blocked up with vehicles, and peasant, pig, and cattle drivers stopped the way; so I had time to look about me ere I arrived at the Inn. Here, for the first time, I saw the peasant clad in his sheepskin or goatskin, of which, in the descriptions of Brittany costumes, we have so often read. They are not of this place, but hail from the parts about the Menez Arres mountains, and the wild districts near the Poulahouan mines. Here were sturdy-belted peasants clad in dark brown cloth, the very colour of the land they till, which is in the direction of Brest, and of which I shall have more to say hereafter. Then there was Carhaix's veritable native in the costume of his country, made of yellow sackcloth,—thin, cold, and easily soaked with rain; while it fitted so tightly to the person as to suggest the difficulty of its removal at bed-time. I saw, too, the black head-dresses that the *belles* (?) of the Morbihan love to wear, and which seem to make them not unlike the portraits of Sally Brass, of

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servant-girl-starving memory. Many a weary mile have those poor girls tramped to make a few *sous* by the sale of their sackcloth or other native manufacture. There were caps of every sort and shape moving to and fro in the crowd, amongst which, for real elegance, the veritable Carhaisian *coiffe* takes the first rank. Here, there, and everywhere, I saw stamping and gesticulations, such as always accompany Breton buying and selling; and on every side I heard nothing but the rough Breton dialect until I arrived at the Latour d'Auvergne, the Inn that had been recommended to me as the best.

Here I cannot do better than reproduce an extract from a paper that I contributed some time ago to the *Sporting Magazine*, which may give the traveller an idea of the comforts (?) he has to expect under this and some other Breton roofs :—

"'Tis not all gold that glitters' is an ancient proverb, never more truly verified than in the case of our hostelry. An amount of treasure had the landlord expended in white-washing the outside, while the inside he had left a prey to the rats and damp, unmindful of paper peeling off from the walls, and an occasional lath peeping out from its proper place. On entering, we found ourselves in a kitchen, to serve, in future, as a general lounging or sitting-room, amidst the remains of joints, the washing of plates, and the scourings of dishes. Beyond, there is a salle-à-manger, dark and dismal, situated

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between the kitchen and the odoriferous back-yard, combining in an eminent degree the delicious exhalations of the two, and where, twice a-day, two meals are to be served up to some half-dozen hungry guests. Up-stairs it is no better. 'The perfume of the sacrifice,' says the Latin poet, 'ascends above,' which it did here with a vengeance, but still it did away with the necessity of a watch—you knew the time precisely by the intensity of the odour. But, here is our host, who has finished his ecarté, and is now preparing to cook our dinner. Could the pen of a Dickens or the pencil of a Leech do justice to our volatile, good-tempered, noisy, poaching chef? Cooking, shooting, fishing, ecarté, billiards, drinking—nothing came amiss to him; 'everything, indeed, he was in turn, and nothing long.' I see him now, in that felt wide-awake, brown holland greasy coat, a pair of pantaloons with cloth for groundwork, but now patched over with sail cloth, standing over a stew, now talking in French to some stranger just arrived, now shouting in Breton at some unfortunate maid, now throwing in a word or two in English in answer to us—never resting, ever jabber, jabber, clatter, clatter; while, far aloof, like Helen of old, quite the lady, and not bad-looking, stands his wife, neither caring about nor regarding the passing scene. Are not her hours spent in some pleasant bower, far away from the noisy scene? Is she to condescend to

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satisfy the appetites of hungry wayfarers with dishes which none better than she knows how to compound."

Although this was penned a long time since, but little change for the better has occurred in the interim. Such trifles as the painting of the *salle-à-manger*, or the fresh papering of the rooms above, may have done something: still the same spirit of negligence and carelessness preside over every department. "Fair Helen," as of old, has no "*prix fixe*," but regulates her charges according to the appearance of her guests; with which remark I will gladly quit the subject of the Inn, and proceed to "breathe the breath" of the wide open country in its vicinity. Here my eyes were gladdened by the sight of, comparatively speaking, a large amount of cultivation; and there were also large enclosures —a happy exchange for the "cramped pews" of other countries. True it was that our enemies, the banks, are high and strong; but then they are for the most part free from trees and gorse on the top, which form such an inconvenient obstacle elsewhere. I found, in consequence, the partridges in fair abundance, sufficiently so to carry out the idea of the wise man, who suggested that the town owed its nomenclature to the partridge call, which the pronunciation of Carhaix so closely resembles. There were plenty of hares and rabbits, which gave the bourgeois and their nondescript

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hounds an infinity of amusement. The only thing that I regretted at Carhaix was the paucity of wood, which made it rather an indifferent quarter for cock-shooting in the winter; but then it is impossible to have everything, and nothing is easier than to make a change of quarters and obtain the latter sport at the right season. Whenever I have had the luck to find a few cocks here, it has always been in the mild weather during the winter months. The natives declare, that on the advent of a frost they take their departure, and, crossing the mountains, vegetate near the sea; at all events, whether such is the case or not, at that epoch they are very scarce in the interior.

While on the subject of cock-shooting, I may be allowed to digress for a moment to enquire why, of late years, so serious a diminution of the "illustrious strangers" has been universally complained of? I have heard all kinds of reasons and explanations volunteered. Some say that the natives visit their different breeding grounds, and steal their eggs; others that, if high winds prevail during their passage, hundreds are drowned or become victims when, in an exhausted state, they reach the land. By the bye, no bird knows better than a woodcock when a change of the weather will take place, and for some time previously too; so I don't think they would be likely to start just previous to the advent of a gale. Others affirm, that the number killed every year has increased

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in the ratio of five to one. All these may be very good reasons for a slight diminution in the number of our visitors, though, as regards "the high wind theory," I cannot see why now, more than formerly, such a catastrophe should happen. A Polish Prince, whom I met two years ago, furnished me with what appeared to be a far better reason. It has been observed, he said, in the south of France, that many of the great flights come from the east, and, in consequence, it may be fairly presumed, from the steppes of Russia and Poland, where thousands are annually bred. Now on my estate, he went on to say, whenever we have a summer without rain, all the great morasses and swamps are dried up. Of this the foxes and other vermin take advantage, and commit the greatest havoc among the nests, and young broods. Now, if this is true with respect to Poland, why should it not equally apply to other countries, where cocks do congregate? It must be remembered, in support of this theory, that the last three summers have been unusually dry, and, in consequence, less cock, in every district that I know of, been brought to bag. For years previously, wet weather was always more or less prevalent during June and July. Then, complaints of scarcity were seldom heard.

I could give the names of all the *communes* in the vicinity of Carhaix where good sport is to be had, but shall forbear, as I should not be justified in giving the preference to any one, when all are of about the same

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calibre. The *commune* of Cleden is preserved, and in the hands of one proprietor. He might give permission to a stranger, if a polite application were made. If it was not an oft-told tale, I should describe some pleasant days' partridge-shooting that I have had in these parts; but I shall be silent, as I do not think that the fortunes of a partridge-shooter in Brittany are very different from those of his brethren across the Channel. I think, however, that the results of a particular day's cock-shooting may have a spice of novelty about it; and so I shall be excused for giving the details.

An old gentleman, whose domains skirt the banks of the river that descends from Pontargoret (by the bye, what a salmon river that must have been before it was poisoned by the mines), had given me an invitation to his ancestral halls and woods. There was only a bridle road thither from Carhaix; and eight miles are a goodly tramp on a short winter day. One bright frosty morning, I set out betimes in the direction pointed out to me, and after reaching the river, and following its course, it was some time before I could make out his house. I suppose I must call his tree-begirt hovel a "house;" at Carhaix they called it a chateau, but then, "distance lends enchantment to the view." Under the latter denomination the old mansion was classed, no doubt, in the good old days gone by. But like many others in the country its glories have faded, and its skeleton alone re-

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mained as witness of the destruction that the wars of the Ligue inflicted. There were thick massive walls, which enclosed an acre or more of rough uneven grass-plot; there were broken fragments of masonry scattered around, amidst which hobbled sheep grazed and meditated. There were the pillars to which the huge gates once were fixed; and there was the long avenue that led thereto, made up of trees long past their prime. In a small out-building hard by, the proprietor now laid his head. It contained but two rooms, the one on the ground floor, innocent of flooring and bricks, the other built over it, and to be visited only by the agency of a ladder. As I entered the former apartment, a covey of scared chickens started off to the far end; a pig that had been burrowing in the corner for some hidden treasure, looked up for a moment with true porcine nonchalance written in his face; and a dirty beagle commenced to bark and sniff about me, until, apparently satisfied, he returned to his wood-ashes in the grate, and curled himself up therein. Altogether, such a state of dirt and discomfort as this Breton family delighted to revel in, I had never previously seen. My hospitable friend of the rosy countenance (the latter contingent to be attributed as much to the gifts of Bacchus, as the influence of early hours and country air) received me kindly, produced a bottle of Medoc, and would fain have kept me in conversation the whole day, had I not reminded him that time passed, and that the

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chasse should be prosecuted without delay. This he would not join, but he pointed out his domain, and the best places, and with an invitation to return to the flowing bowl at eventide, he left me to my own devices. Now the old gentleman's woods, and those of his neighbours, were splendid specimens of the woodcocks' selected retreats in Brittany. Copse No. 1, was hollow at the bottom, and had just a sprinkling of hollies down to a rivulet that slowly trickled onward to the Mine River. On a frosty day like this, every cock in the place had apparently come to take tea therein. Copse No. 2, was thick and matted with brambles, even up to the chest of the bold *chasseur* who forced it. Let the "well-belled" spaniels try this on a moist morning, and "the gun" in advance of them will be singularly successful. Copse No. 3, is composed of fern and underwood, happily mixed together, to which "the illustrious strangers" in mild, ordinary weather, are remarkably partial. So the day being frosty, I had nothing to do but beat the hollies and the "concave" portions of the woods, and then kill and miss in equal proportions. Would that I had not visited my friend that evening in his woodland home. Would that we had not drank another and another bottle to the health of his ancestors, who, though "jolly good fellows," did what most good fellows have done before him, viz., "*mangeaient*" the property that should have been handed down to their descendants. Would that he

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had cut short the history of his own career, and how, being childless, he intended to leave very little to the lawyers, with whom it appeared he had had numberless squabbles. It was indeed lucky that there was a bright moon and cloudless sky overhead, or I hardly think I should have reached Carhaix that night.

After this brief description of what the Chouan territory offered in the way of shooting, I will just glance at the angler's prospects. The river of Carhaix, as may be seen by reference to the map, has its source above Callac. Without receiving any tributaries of consequence *en route,* it passes by Carhaix (five minutes' walk), and falls into the canal some three miles below the town. When I first saw it, I thought it must be a capital trout stream. There were but few trees to hinder the caster of a "long line," and there was plenty of deep water (perhaps too much), and some good currents (above). I found that little or no netting was practised, no night-lines used, and scarcely a *good* fisherman ever angled therein. Why, then, with all these advantages, is it not one of the best rivers in Brittany? I have thought, sometimes, that the breeding ground was too limited, or that the white fish committed great havoc amongst the spawn, or that the water was not congenial to the trout. One of these reasons may be the right one; but the fact cannot be ignored, that, if the real cause was discovered, there would be no possibility, here in

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Brittany, of removing it. It was, however, a pleasant thing to know that the fish were large; in fact, I have seen a Carhaix trout pull down the scale at four pounds and a half; but such monsters of course seldom took the fly. It was the natural minnow, artfully spun, that deceived the best, and in the still water on a windy day I have had, and seen others have, very good sport. There was an old cobbler, who was a great stickler for minnow spinning, and on every favourable day I found him on the water's edge. Many a hard fight have I had to try and land more fish with the artificial phantom minnow, than he, with his curiously arranged minnow-tackle; but on every occasion he beat me out of the field, or rather water. I always preferred the reach of water, between Little Carhaix and the first mill above the town, to any other spot in the immediate neighbourhood. When in the humour for a long walk, I ascended to the third mill, and fished the water above, with, generally speaking, good success.

It was almost a hopeless task thrashing the torpid waters of the canal for the chance of hooking a good fish, although there are some to be caught. I was very soon disgusted with the movements of the little dace, chub, and roach, who swarmed therein, and rose at my fly as soon as it touched the surface. Still at times I have nerved myself to the task, and commenced at the first weir after the junction of the

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Carhaix river, ("a noted" place, as they say in Sussex, for a trout,) and then descending, fished below each weir in succession. I always considered the canal admirably adapted for the minor sorts of fishing enterprise—to wit, worm-fishing and angling with the live minnow. So thought the Carhaixian Justice of the Peace, who, on a hot summer's day, usually proceeded there, for the purpose of recruiting his energies after the exhausting "processes" introduced to his notice by a litigious peasantry. The poor little perch, which were very plentiful, were the objects of his visit. He used to take up a position below a weir, light a black clay pipe, and refresh himself with a draught from a something-strong-containing bottle, and afterwards fix his undivided attention on the evolutions of his float. Presently he would rush off to some neighbouring rivulet to replenish his stock of minnows. What a flood of "*sacristis*" and "*nom de chiens*" would burst forth when, on his return, he found a large weed had prevented him killing "*la plus belle perche*" in the canal. Poor fellow, though his success was but small, he stuck to his amusement like a man. I was very fond of wetting a line in a little stream that flows from the mountains on this side of Gourin. I used to walk for three miles and a half on the Quimperlè Road, and then fish up or downstream as fancy led me. In the latter case, I always managed very well, and had nearly a basket full before I reached

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the canal into which the little stream eventually falls. In the summer, the grasshopper was the most killing bait; and I have known five dozen trout killed by one rod in a very short time.

I knew the environs of Carhaix well, ere good fortune led me to the hidden treasures of "Pleuyé," a little town on that River Elers which flows from the mountains about La Feuillèe, tumbles over the cascades of St. Herbot, winds round the hamlet of Pleuyé, and finally falls into the "Mine River," six miles from Carhaix. There were, therefore, three excellent starting points from whence to fish it—La Feuillèe, Huelgoat, and Carhaix; the last named being the worst of the three, and all at some distance from the stream. To Pleuyé itself I never yet took my carpet bag, or laid my head in that wretched auberge. Should future piscators elect to try its *cuisine* and its bed, (query, has it more than one?) they must do it on their own responsibility, not on mine. Now, from Carhaix thither, I discovered three routes. One necessitated some "across-country-work," and the wading of a supplementary river, which, on account of the difficulty of following it up, I shall not attempt to describe. The second was to proceed along the old Chateauneuf Road, some six miles, until I came to where the Elers joined the Mine River, and ascend the right bank after passing the first mill. The third and best plan was to join the jolly driver of the Lander-

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neau mail cart at seven a.m., rattle (in the real sense of the word) along with him to the new bridge, and then proceed on foot to Pleuyé. The spire of that hamlet, perched on a lofty hill, was always a gay deceiver. It always looked so near, yet in reality took so long to reach. From there—not the spire, but the ground beneath—the river might be seen meandering through the valley, and by a straight cut across the fields its banks were soon reached. I always found the dozen runs above, and the quarter of a mile of still water below the hamlet the very best of the lower fishings; and if I failed in filling my basket here, my chance of success was not particularly rosy. However, as my best way home lay by the river-side, I made a practice of throwing my fly over any likely hole. Many a time have I made a successful cast beneath the stones and rocks that here impeded the current; so that by the time I reached the junction of the Elers with the Mine River, and took the old Chateauneuf and Carhaix route, I would generally have been glad to have had some stout young pedestrian to carry the basket.

The plain black hackle, with or without silver twist, is the fly that a Pleuyé trout coveted most; he must have been very "ill" to refuse that. Even the old object in goatskin or sheepskin, the only legitimate *pêcheur* I ever met on this river, recognised the black colour as the most killing, and mounted

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such a fly, made of rough black compounds, as would have given Charles Farlow a fit had he seen it. It was a queer, old, noseless original, that *pêcheur;* how he used to stare at me and my rod, and mutter mystic Breton words, which, whether complimentary or not, my slight acquaintance with the language did not enable me to judge! In fact, I never found any one here beside the millers, who could, or rather would, speak French; so I brushed up a few words and phrases, which might be useful on an emergency.

As Carhaix is about in the centre of Lower Brittany, and six of the principal roads converge thereupon, it is a good place to select for a starting point to the three "Circuits" into which I am going to divide the yet undescribed fishings and shootings. I shall commence with the "Western Circuit," which will include Commana, La Feuillèe, Huelgoat, Sizun, Landivisiau, Landerneau, Daoulas, L'Hopital, Le Faou, Chateaulin, Quimper, Rosporden, &c.; I will then introduce the notabilities of the "Southern Circuit," including Gourin, Le Faouet, Quimperlé, Pont Scorff, Hennebon, Plouay, Lochriste, &c.; and conclude with those of the "Northern," viz., Callac, Morlaix, St. Pol, Le Pouthou, Plestein, Lannion, Belle Isle en Terre, Treguier, and St. Brieux.

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CHAPTER VIII.

It was on a dull morning, in the month of March, that I started from Carhaix on this, my first, tour of inspection. I had with me a French gentleman, an ardent admirer of the *chasse* and *pêche*, but about as crotchety an individual as ever breathed. Some sixty summers had whitened his hair, many of which had been employed in the collection of his country's revenue. His detractors said it was from this source he surreptitiously drew the handsome independence he now enjoyed. He still fancied himself a young man, and arrayed himself in garments that would have set better on a youth of twenty; so on Sundays was that white hat and tartan suit ever most prominent on the shady "Place:" so on every week-day were those tight trowsers and coat most carefully arranged about his person, ere he betook himself to the river-side and stubble-field. This morning, his Normandy airs drowned the monotonous hum of the wheels, and the crushing, blood-curdling sound of the break, so carefully adjusted by the driver of the Landerneau mail-cart. This term I apply to the small "box on wheels" that carried

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the letters, and had accommodation (?) for two passengers. We were *en route* for Huelgoat, famed for its lead and silver mines, and about ten miles distant from Carhaix. This, the Imperial cart took two hours to perform, which was, perhaps, as much as could be expected from the little animal attached to the shafts. As Huelgoat was not on the main road, we had to walk, bags in hand, after leaving the cart, over a bleak, desolate moor. Thanks to some worthy capitalist, we found the Inn had been rebuilt, and the *salle-à-manger* and bedrooms much superior to our late quarters at Carhaix. The absence of viands at breakfast and dinner (it being Lent) made us regret that we had neglected to give notice of our advent,—a hint that future travellers, at that time of the year, would do well to profit by.

Our object in coming here was to fish the river Elers, above and below the cascades of St. Herbot. To-day, however, we were not likely to attain our object, as the rain descended, as it only can in hilly districts. Now, the ex-revenue collector had a great horror of a wet jacket, and with much difficulty I persuaded him, during a lull in the storm, to visit the lion of Huelgoat, to wit, the disappearance of a stream underground, and its reproduction a little lower down. The scenery, made up of woods and rocks, even on such a day as this, was very striking. In summer it must be well worthy of a visit. The forest stretches in a northerly direction for miles, and is a great place

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for woodcocks in winter. I was much frightened by the myths of the country people, respecting the strict preservation of the *chasse* by one Monsieur Blacke, of mine notoriety; but, when shooting in many parts of this so-called preserve, I never yet met a keeper, or was I ever warned off. So Huelgoat, being close to the parish of Pleuyè, which is a good partridge beat, would be a good quarter for the sportsman who does not mind facing the cool breeze of the winter season in a sort of Highland home. After a short time we returned to the Inn and to the frugal meal, which was done ample justice to by two other gentlemen besides ourselves,—viz., a collector of taxes and the supervisor of all the Government woods in the department of Finisterre. The first was a terrible grumbler, and told us much about his own property in sunny Champagne, and how he was counting the days to when he would be released from his present post. The second was quite a young man, and when I asked him some question about Huelgoat, "*Monsieur,*" he answered, "*c'est un pays pe-r-r-rdu,*" and not another word could I get out of him. I could not forget that "perdu" even when I retired to bed. It came back to me in my dreams, and next day, when a fine bracing morning saw us on the road betimes for the river-side.

The distance from Huelgoat to the Cascades of St. Herbot was quite four miles; but we went to the nearest point of the river at Montauban (phonetic),

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which may be about three miles distant. The river was full, and tolerably clear after the late rain. At first everything went off well, and, as the river was devoid of trees, it was "fishing made easy." My French friend mounted his gaudy flies, purchased of Loissons at Morlaix, and caught more fish than I did, until I put on a large red palmer; but when we came within hail of the cascades it was quite a different state of affairs. There the water began to boil and surge through the large rocks that filled the bed of the river, and the underwood began to be very troublesome, which provoked the ex-collector to give vent to many "*sacristis*" and execrations, as he lost fly after fly in the branches. The pools were very deep, and if I only had had some minnows, or even the "phantoms" that were stolen out of my room at Carhaix, I am sure I could have done something worth talking about. As it was, I passed on, or rather over, the primeval rocks as quickly as I could, and fished the river below the cascades. Now, the landlord can tell a dozen or more stories about the fish, and the size thereof, that are located above these falls; and he is even prepared to swear that he himself weighed a fish that turned the scale at nine pounds, which, I am sure, is nothing more or less than a fable. I do not deny that there are large trout, which are to be caught with spinning tackle; but, nine pounds weight! tell it to the marines!

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The collector and I returned to the Inn with two good baskets of trout, although the water below the cascades, which we fished patiently in the afternoon, never was, and never will be, so good as that above; and he was very proud of one, the hero of the day, that weighed little more than a pound, but was in very bad condition. In the evening the landlord regaled us with many anecdotes touching the lake on which Huelgoat is built, and which supplies the mines with water. He told us how certain Englishmen borrowed the boat, and had very good sport on two successive days. I afterwards made every inquiry, and actually saw the same anglers. They said they certainly caught a few trout, but that none weighed more than three quarters of a pound, and that they wondered there were any fish so large as that, considering that the lake was nearly empty throughout at least two of the summer months. We were agreeably surprised, on leaving Huelgoat, to find that our bill was only at the rate of half-a-crown a day, without extras, and that the charge for the latter was very moderate.

We had heard that to fish the upper portion of the river Elers, we must go by the same Landerneau road, to a little village called La Feuillèe. So we packed up our traps, and met our ancient friend, the box on wheels, at the "Grand Junction," where it had previously set us down; and in one hour we arrived at the Inn of Mons. Flock at La Feuillèe. This little village was on the east of the Menez Arres

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hills, and many feet above the level of the sea. It might more correctly be termed a collection of hovels, above eight of which, by the by, the mistletoe was hanging, a sign to the thirsty traveller that cider and spirits were sold within. The peat fires, and the smell arising therefrom, the language of the frieze-coated inhabitants not unlike that of the Gael, the houses built low to withstand the storm, all tended to remind one of the characteristics of a Highland hamlet. Mons. Flock's hostelry, we found, could not boast of more than one bedroom; but as this contained three beds, we took possession forthwith. Madame improvised a capital breakfast; so good, in fact, that even the ex-collector, sufficiently fastidious at all times, could find no fault. A small boy was next selected from the top-spinners in the place, who, for the moderate pay of five-pence, was to lead us across the moor, and through the dirtiest of lanes, to the junction of the two streams that form the river. *Auspice* small boy, we floundered through almost bottomless mud, until we arrived at the edge of the great Bog of St. Michel, where our guide's assistance was as necessary as before, to steer us clear of the swamps, that present, at this season of the year, a very treacherous appearance.

There were thousands of acres of apparently irredeemable bog-land spread out before us, and surrounded by mountains, amongst which St. Michel was most

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conspicuous, with its chapel on the summit, once the home of a certain hermit of pious memory.

It was an exact counterpart of many scenes in Connemara, and other parts of Ireland, where a few shepherd boys are the lords of the desert, and their unhappy half-starved kine the only features in the landscape. Now, the moor is suggestive of snipe-shooting, and the pursuit of widgeon, teal, ducks, and other denizens of the swamps. The latter are certainly not wanting in winter; but they are the craftiest of their kind, requiring more care in circumventing than I care to use. Snipes, strangely enough, do not abound in the morass, but betake themselves to the springs that bubble up at the heads of the valleys that lead out of the bog. As to partridges, it was currently reported that there were none, until we shot over the parish of Branilis, and other spots known to an old poacher, whom Mons. Flock delighteth to honour. Then we lit upon many covies, and a fair sprinkling of hares; but woe betide these small preserves should hard shooting be practised therein, or bad breeding seasons supervene. The angler, on the other hand, should he wish to do full justice to the river, ought to devote at least three days to it. The first day he should commence at the junction of the two streams, and descend to the mill of Castro (phonetic). He should halt and give much attention to a certain place, about a quarter of a mile from where he commenced, and which has

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a fringe of brushwood on its north bank for about a hundred yards. There are good fish here, and it is, perhaps, the best place in all the river. The second day will be well spent in fishing from the mill of Castro to the new bridge, below the hamlet of Branilis. The third day he may begin at this bridge, and fish down to the Cascades of St. Herbot, if he does not mind a walk of seven miles across the mountains afterwards (not without a guide, be it remembered, or La Feuillèe will not be reached that evening). In these three days, he will scarcely see a tree on the banks, except at St. Herbot,—a meed of praise that can be given to but few Brittany rivers. The fish are remarkably good to eat, which is easily accounted for by the quantity of worms and good nourishment that must be swept by the rain off the marais of St. Michel.

Previous to this digression, the collector and myself were being piloted across the bog. In from fifty minutes to an hour we arrived at the junction of the small streams, and found the water very high, from the quantity of rain that had fallen during the night. This had not, however, affected its colour to an alarming extent, so we adjusted some large flies, and commenced, one on each side. Now, my companion set about his work in his usual crafty style. He left his flies in the water for full a minute, and sank them under the bank as he would a worm. And this proceeding answered well, considering that he

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had nineteen fish in his basket at call time, of which ten were more than respectable. I joked him very freely afterwards about his system of fly-fishing, and asked him whether it was equally successful when the water was clean and bright; when he poured out a torrent of *par examples*, and referred to his book of last year, which showed a total of 694 dace!! and 33 trout! as the glorious result. No wonder that he went home to-night triumphant, as I am almost certain that this was the most successful day he had ever had. I fished my favourite spot (where the brushwood covers the north bank), and was well pleased with the capture of fourteen nice trout and many smaller fry. Oh! Madame Flock, noble-hearted creature, what a capital dinner your fair (?) hands concocted for us that evening; but would that you could supply some better fluid than beet-root brandy to wash down the prandial meal. Our foresight was indeed great, when we hid in our portmanteaus some bottles of veritable cognac, which made us independent of your villainous concoctions. On reverting to the chimney corner, after dinner, we found a chair already occupied by the brigadier of *gend'armerie*, ex-officer in Algeria, and now general purveyor of local intelligence. Gossip though he was, his duties were of no light order; nor were his leisure hours too plentiful. He was always on the *qui vive* to stop the convicts who had escaped from Brest, who were

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about as villainous a set as could be found anywhere; and as the reward for each captive was about four pounds sterling, our brigadier was as active as any of his brethren.

Seldom, he told me, did a week pass, but what some convicts managed to put off their manacles and variegated garments, and escape from durance vile. After their safe arrival in the mountains, they select some high-road which will eventually take them to Paris. Whenever they come in sight of a large town, they make a detour, and, when in want of provisions, make successful applications to the peasantry. Now, there is a hamlet, of more imposing appearance, but unoccupied by *gensd'armes*, just above La Feuillèe. So the *forçats* avoid the former, and are not so careful when passing the latter. Hence the numerous arrests, oftentimes after a tremendous fight, that our brigadier makes. On the other hand, he says, if the convicts can once reach Nantes or Paris, they are comparatively safe, which does not say much for the efficiency of the Paris police. Perhaps they are too much engaged with Englishmen's passports to be able to give a passing thought to these ruffians of the deepest dye.

Poor Mons. Flock, who, by the by, if it were not for his red nose, would be the *beau ideal* of a "respectable man," had the misfortune to break his leg some years ago, and is now unable to walk very far. He, however, volunteered to come with us to-morrow.

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We then retired to the chamber of repose, where I had the pleasure of seeing the ex-collector envelope his aged head in a bandana handkerchief with much care and ceremony. Next morning I found him flourishing the said night-cap before the window, to show his delight at seeing such a fine morning for our trip. Though the rays of the sun were warm, the air was as bracing as only mountain air can be; and as there was abundance of water in the river, a little sun did not make much difference. We marched betimes on Branilis, whose church we saw from afar, and which, by its seeming propinquity, sadly deceives the stranger. Murray gave a few lines in commendation thereof, so we deposited rod and basket at the portal, and entered. There was a pretty fair (query, as regards the lady portion?) audience before the altar, and the priest was at his post, looking as demure and good as a priest should. You would hardly believe that he is, perhaps, the best fighter in the country, and that every peasant, and some strangers too, are afraid of those broad shoulders and muscular arm. I wonder whether his diocesan is aware of his unclerical pursuit, or approves of the "church militant" in the primary sense of the word. We now dropped down on the Mill of Castro, and found the river had fallen considerably in the night. Mons. Flock would not bring his fishing-*stick* (I cannot call it a rod), but installed himself as my monitor, respecting the best casts, and deepest

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holes. His advice I followed to the letter, and my little black gnat and alder flies were very successful in the different spots that he recommended. As to the ex-collector, his large abortions were useless, and being too proud to borrow of me, he mounted an artificial minnow, and expected to do something with that in clear water!! I left him hard at work with that gaudy implement, and fished, under the guidance of Mons. F., down to the new Branilis Bridge. This is the *sunny* side of the story, to which the afternoon came as a damper in more senses than one; for the clouds came up with the rapidity common to mountain districts, the fish left off rising, and a steady down-pour set in. My companion was anything but pleasant. Visions of lumbago and rheumatism flitted before him, as he tramped along that rugged mountain path. I fancied this would be his last day's fishing, judging by the way he rolled out his "*Sacristis,*" and grumbled on the passage home.

My prognostications were verified on the morrow, when no amount of persuasion would induce him to come to the fore. He preferred playing ecarté with the landlord for glasses of raspail (a favourite *liqueur*), to running the chance of another ducking by the river-side. I was, in consequence, obliged to go with a boy to the bridge of Branilis, and fish down to St. Herbot, on the same water, that I had previously visited, when at Huelgoat. The monotony of the

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ex-collector's game was broken by the arrival of a carriage from Timour, with a wounded gentleman inside, on his way to Brest. It was the old story of a person mounting a bank with his gun on full cock, and his friend, on giving assistance, receiving the whole charge through his right arm. I do not think the pens of a hundred Mr. Bishops would induce these reckless gentry to use ordinary caution. My chief cause for wonder is, that more accidents do not occur. There were only three, that I heard of, last year, and none of these were fatal. It might seem curious, that these gentlemen were shooting at Easter time, so long after the legitimate season had closed. They excused themselves by saying, that they were shooting over their own property, and, owing to the press of business, could find but little time for sporting in the season. This is so like the conduct of the so-called *gentlemen* of Brittany. They hold it to be quite a sufficient excuse for breaking the law, that they *wanted* the game or the salmon; and they sally forth with gun or net, no matter what time of the year it may be. No one, after this, will be surprised to hear, that the poor country people follow the bad example set them by their superiors.

The clouds were clearing off the mountains, and there was every prospect of better weather; but this latter consideration did not induce my companion to continue his travels. He missed, I expect, his cups

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of coffee and his newspaper, and his quiet chat at the café, and his exhibition of the stunner tartan on the Sabbath. And this wily man afterwards informed me that he had other reasons for this dissolution of partnership, viz., that he scented, from afar, the bad dinner, and knew well what wretched accommodation awaited me. So we paid Mons. Flock three shillings a day for his entertainment, and the ex-collector returned to Carhaix, while I set my face in the opposite direction.

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CHAPTER IX.

AGAIN the "little box on wheels" picked me up, and carried me over the mountains for about five miles, setting me down within five minutes' walk of the fine steeple of Commana. Here, to-day, there was a fête; so in front of the church I found half the population engaged in the truly Breton game of bowls. The remainder were indulging in everlasting pipes, and looking on at the game with as much interest as their unintelligent faces could muster up. The advent of a Britisher was of rare occurrence, and occasioned a rush to the auberge for the latest intelligence, and reasons of his coming. Heaven help the man who is doomed to pass two or three *wet* days in this sink of wretchedness; heaven be praised that the weather was fine during my visit. Madame Huet, who was supposed to manage the affairs of the Inn, (for her husband was hen-pecked, and only allowed to occupy himself with "la commerce," viz., buying up butter for the Landivisiau market,) was a veritable dragon. She was intoxicated from morning till night, and she bullied her husband, her

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daughter, and, I may say, her guests. Fancy, the old termagant actually sat down with me to dinner (Breton soup and hard corn beef), ate with her fingers, grinned at me, asked absurd questions, and rambled in her conversation on every conceivable topic. I tried to get rid of her by smoking,—simply ridiculous,—she smoked too. I walked on the Place, she winked and leered at me from the doorway. This was all very dreadful, but I had still much room for pity for her unfortunate daughter, who always lived in the midst of it, and who confided to me her intention of entering a convent as soon as the necessary funds could be raised. The latter's interest I easily procured in the matter of breakfast on the morrow. Coffee and milk she could manage, but she hinted that I must superintend the operation of egg-boiling. And so to bed with aching head; and the room seemed to me to be the best part of the establishment. Still, even thither was I followed by the dragon, who would not leave the room till I was actually between the sheets. I might have been thankful that she did not, in Iceland fashion, give me a parting kiss, which would have been the worst of all.

Early, so early, for fear of the dragon, I came down stairs, and superintended the fabrication of breakfast. What a simple thing that egg was, and which I had selected, as being the only thing the dear creatures could not put their fingers into;

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but, then, what ignorance on my part to have boiled it for three minutes and a half, when there was not a spoon in the establishment to eat it with! However, the bracing mountain air soon restored my ruffled equanimity, and having hired a young Commanite to show me the road, and perform other services, I was quickly *en route* for the neighbouring streams. This youth was a quaint urchin of twelve years of age, but so precocious, that he might be reasonably thought much older. His cranium was adorned, after the manner of other Commanites, with a black tom-fool's cap, in the folds of which he secreted his pipe, birds' eggs, and any other treasures that he might collect *en route*. He took me to a spot about two miles from the town, called La Roche Bernard, the name of the estate that once belonged to a young Breton noble, whose untimely ruin was much regretted in the neighbourhood. This young man had taken to play (the old story), and soon become involved in debt. He was then obliged to sell his acres to his lawyer, who made hay while the sun shone, and cut down so much wood as quite to spoil the beauty of this part of the country. Here I found that two mountain torrents joined, but forming, much to my disappointment, only a very diminutive stream. For my French friend had vaunted it to the skies; but its appearance was, certainly, not much in its favour. In spite of the trees, I fished down for about three miles, to where there was a

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bridge thrown over it, on the new Quimper road. Up to this point all the trout, that I caught, were small, and no wonder, considering that I could jump the stream at almost any place. If I did not catch any good fish, I had great fun in watching the feats of young Commana, when he went into the water to pick the fly out of some over-hanging bush, or scaled a high tree to look for a bird's nest. Below bridge, the river improved, and I caught some better fish; but I am certain none that I ever took on this or any other day weighed more than three quarters of a pound. The scenery was very wild; and rocks, heather, and brushwood formed the component parts. On every eminence there was a steeple belonging to a chapel, not necessarily used every Sunday, but only for certain "*pardons*" on fixed days. On our way home we met the grand *chasseur* of Commana, in the person of a man of all work to Monsieur Le Curè. His was the only license taken out last year in the village, consequently, he was looked upon as quite an authority on sporting. He told me, that his work prevented him from taking the field very often, but, that he had, nevertheless, accounted for 250 head the preceding season. He was very jealous of certain unlicensed peasants, who wielded their long single-guns with some effect, and found Morlaix market ever ready to receive their game. I thought the sporting in this *commune* very good; but when I shoot over it again

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I shall make Landivisiau my head-quarters, as I could never again put up with the dragon. The only things that a lodger at Landivisiau requires, are a good carriage and a sharp peasant; the latter being necessary to point out the best places, some of which are at a little distance from the town.

Oh! what a delightful thing to hear, on my return, that Madame was *malade,* and that her considerate daughter had charitably put her to bed. Still, in her absence, it was incumbent on some one to show attentions to the stranger; so the old man came out of his shell, and sat down with me to dinner, manipulated his meat, and performed even worse antics than his loving spouse. The "murder" came out after dinner, when I tasted the contents of the brandy bottle; and the reason of the dragon's malady was sufficiently clear. Not only had she consumed the fine Cognac it contained, but she had substituted some execrable eau-de-vie (eightpence halfpenny a bottle) in its place. This was a sore blow, so I descended to the kitchen, and looked to tobacco for consolation, without which, life, in these parts, would be insupportable. Here I found a man in a blouse, just arrived from Landerneau on a special mission, more or less connected with the butter trade. He was, I soon discovered, a fierce Red Republican, not in outward appearance, like the Adelphi prototype, with red beard, red hair, red everything, but only in his

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opinions, of which he gave me the benefit with tolerable calmness for a Frenchman. He was one of a numerous class that I have met with in this department of Finisterre, who, from close companionship with the manufacturing classes, have imbibed many of their ultra opinions. Like them, he cared not one straw for dynasties,—Buonapartes, or Bourbons, —but very ready to agitate for his own benefit and emolument, well knowing that, in previous revolutions many men of his own class had stepped into the places of richer men, and that some political change might lead to his own aggrandizement. He knew, I suppose, this evening, that there were no *gensd'armes* within hearing, or rather within four miles of him; so he gave me the benefit of his ideas without reserve. But conversation will bring thirst: at least so thought *notre ami* the Republican, and the inevitable *goattes* were called for, which I, in common politeness, was bound to swallow, and oh, my poor head, how it ached that night! Shall I ever forget it?

A bad night is a great incentive to early rising, and inhaling betimes the fresh morning air. So, as soon as the sun appeared above the Menez Arres, I was again on the road, for the purpose of visiting the river of Sizun. Young Commana was again my guide, running by my side, and chattering incessantly. At one moment this mischievous urchin would direct his attention to some care-worn, ragged black

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sheep that were picking up a miserable subsistence by the river-side, and scare them with an unearthly whistle, loud enough to frighten them into a neighbouring corn-field. At another, he perchance spied a "milky mother of the herd," and proceeded to drive her into a thick hedge, where he left that meditative animal to extricate itself as best it could. His amusements were only cut short by our arrival at a little brook, about a mile and a half from Commana, which ultimately swells into the Sizun stream, and the ex-salmon river of Landerneau. I saw at a glance that it was, on account of its size, only adapted to worm and grasshopper fishing, and, having marked numerous trout, that darted about in different directions, for another day, I dropped down to a large mill-dam, about three miles from Commana. Here the current was more rapid, and the river larger, and with a cloudy sky in my favour, I had no difficulty in filling my basket with far better fish than I had taken the preceding day.

The further I descended, the fewer rises I had. As the water looked more likely, and the scenery prettier; the trees became troublesome, and the fish very scarce. I learnt from my guide that I was close to Sizun; so, I put up my rod, and paid that village a visit. It stood in the midst of a desolate plain, about two miles from the Carhaix and Landerneau high road; and, of all the places I ever visited, none appeared more painfully

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wretched and miserable. There was an Inn (chez Charetier), which could afford the same amount of luxury, at the same price as at Commana, minus the dragon of brandy-tippling memory. There was a principal street occupied, by dirty mud-pie making urchins, and by their mammas, who equalled their progeny in a dirty point of view, but surpassed them in ugliness. There was a *gensd'armerie*, inhabited, it would appear, by the gentle sex only, to judge from the number of coiffed heads that popped out of the window to gaze at the stranger. There was a bureau of a preceptor, or tax-collector, who cursed the day he quitted his sunny Gascony, and in vain attempted to banish *ennui* by the river-side. The poor *gensd'armes* even, found time pass so slowly, that they wisely hung up their swords on the white-washed wall, and retired to certain deep holes below the town, which could not be easily poached, and therefore afforded some amusement to the poor fellows.

"Time was" when an Englishman killed, in one day, his 106 trout on this very river, the best of which weighed within a little of three pounds. But, alas! the glories of Sizun have departed. This change is chiefly owing to the poaching habits of the natives, and the unusually dry summers we have had lately. At the end of the hay harvest the water is so low, and business so slack, that the peasantry have nothing better to do than net the trout. They

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do tell a story anent a deep hole in this river, the treasures of which had never been previously ransacked. The way they treated it will exactly illustrate the fishing manners and customs of the present day. One morning, after harvest, about two years ago, Sizun turned out to a man, and proceeded to this place armed with spades and pitchers. They turned off the water, and commenced to "lade" with much assiduity. They had nearly completed their task, when the water burst through the embankment, and visited the law-breakers with such a ducking, as it would be better for their health to have every day. Nothing daunted, they went to work the following day, when the Fates were more propitious, and a barrel and a half of trout were removed therefrom!!

It is a curious thing, that while the fishing laws were quite disregarded, those respecting the shooting should be so strictly enforced. The sword of Damocles may be said to hang over the setter of snares, while an unlicensed carrier of a gun must be out before sunrise to escape the Argus eyes of the police. The fact is, that there are two or three *gensd'armes* in Sizun, who love to claim the penalties inflicted on unlicensed sportsmen, and who are, consequently, ever on the watch for offenders. Hence, the shooting is very good throughout the *commune*, although, there are more legitimate sportsmen resident in Sizun than in

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Çommana; but, as I have said of the latter place, any one wishing to test its capabilities must either rough it amid much discomfort, or come from a distance in a carriage. From Sizun to Landivisiau the river presented a beautiful appearance to the angler's eye, although it is too much obstructed by trees to suit the fancy of an indifferent fisherman. Every one may as well abstain from fishing it, for, independent of this obstacle, the late dry summers have inflicted damage that it will take some time to recover.

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CHAPTER X.

THE, I confess, happy moment for leaving Commana had arrived, and it was arranged that, in the absence of any decent conveyance, self and portmanteau should go to Landivisiau in my landlord's butter cart. The ceremony of paying was very soon accomplished, as one shilling and eight-pence was all they charged per diem, for bed, breakfast, dinner, and coffee; that of taking leave, was a work of time. There was much shaking of hands with dragon and daughter, and many promises of a speedy return,—made only, I am afraid, to be broken. I hardly know how long they might not have kept me there, if old Huet had not waxed impatient, and bidding me beware of falling back into his greasy baskets, literally driven me from the door. Slowly the old mare jogged on, in the train of other similar vehicles wending their way to the same market. The eight miles of road, between Commana and Landivisiau, took two hours and a half to accomplish. This gave my conductor ample time to talk, which he had not dared to do in the presence of the dragon. He pointed out the property of his son-in-law, who, although only a farmer, has, he said, 1,800*l.* a-year. He, moreover, hinted, that he himself

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gave his daughter a handsome dowry. He told me also of his cattle importations to England, and how he lost money by sending them to London, while he made much by sending them to Jersey. In fact, I was lost in wonder, that, capitalist as he made himself out to be, he still resided in Commana's dreary township. As vendor of Government tobacco, he knew how much was annually consumed by two thousand Communites (men, women, and children inclusive). I was indeed astonished when he told me that it amounted to 3,600lbs., and I began to think what a tax it was in the hands of Government, and yet, by the returns, it does not seem to yield so much as it ought.

Slowly the cart threaded its way through the assemblage of pack-horses, people, and all the paraphernalia of a country fair, until it deposited me safely at the Hotel de la Grande Maison, at Landivisiau. After the revelations made by the old man on the road, respecting the wealth of his son-in-law, and his various speculations, I felt rather shy of asking him what he expected to receive for his cart accommodation. Such modesty was quite misplaced. He was quite ready with the English ostler's reply of "What you please, sir?" so I offered him a franc, which he dropped into his leather pouch, shook me warmly by the hand, and departed, whither hard bargains and butter contracts called him.

I have read in Lord Dufferin's "Letters from High

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Latitudes," how, after his departure from Stornoway, "and having remained for several hours on deck in the presence of the tempest, peering through the darkness at those black liquid walls of water mounting above you in ceaseless agitation, or tumbling over in cataracts of gleaming foam, the wind roaring through the rigging—every thing around in tumult; to descend into the quiet of a snug well-lighted little cabin, with the firelight dancing on the white rose-bud chintz, the well furnished book-shelves, and all the numerous nick-nacks that decorate its walls—little Edith's portrait looking so serene—all combine to inspire a feeling of comfort and security difficult to define." I am sure I experienced nearly the same sensations after leaving my realms of discomfort, and entering a house, where, the traveller was expected, if not welcomed. The clean, though sanded, floor, the white linen, the well served breakfast, the room fantastically, but still well papered, the quiet civility of the landlady—presented such a marked contrast to what I had found in those mountain "bear-gardens," that it will take a long time to make me forget my feelings of "all serene" on the morning of my arrival at Landivisiau. True, after ten o'clock, hungry candidates for omelettes and stews trooped in; when, each adding his mite to the Babel of voices, the character it had previously enjoyed for serenity was sorely damaged; still, it was something, to be able to hear a little rational conversation after the absurd

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rubbish I had been compelled to listen to, in the unsophisticated parts of Brittany.

The quietest of the party (most of them were merchants who attended the fair) were, as usual, two Government *employés*, who, as *habitués* should do, occupied the posts of honour at the table; and this reminds me that I have never yet said a word about these "*Pensionaires*," as they are called, who in every town in Brittany, and France likewise, resort to the principal hotel for their breakfast and dinner. They are generally employed in the Government schools, or bureaus, at salaries ranging between 35*l.* and 100*l.* per annum. They make a bargain with the landlords to board them for from 2*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* a month, inclusive of cider in Brittany, and (very) ordinary wine in the vineyard districts; an arrangement that suits the landlord, who thus has certain "standing dishes" for his *table d'hôte*, as likewise the *employé*, who is thus able to live at a very cheap rate. Englishmen sometimes strike the same bargain, when they make any protracted stay in a place. I have often made a great mistake in confounding the *employés*, with the crowd of *commis-voyageurs*, which, I may be excused for saying so, *infest* every hotel in the country. I should not have used such a term, had I not found the majority of them as unpolite, as the *employés* were the contrary. At early morn, when most people were enjoying balmy slumbers, the *commis-voyageurs* would

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chant and sing as though the hotel belonged to them, and nobody else was therein. At breakfast they would seize the viands, and help themselves, to the prejudice of even ladies, should they happen to be at table; after dinner they never scrupled to put impertinent questions, and intrude themselves when least wanted. The greater portion of the bagmen invariably indulge in such vagaries. So, when I have seen the *employés* mistaken for them, and snubbed by my countrymen, I have quite felt for the poor gentlemen who were always so civil to strangers, at table, and elsewhere.

After breakfast, I strolled out to see "the fun of the fair." This mainly consisted in watching the gesticulations, and listening to the conversation of the buyers and sellers, or witnessing the confusion created by the antics of some lively nag, who did not look upon the fair in the same light as his master. There were no "Widdicombs," or "dancing parties," or "singing circles," such as, at a Carhaix Fair, or in other country places, reigned paramount. But I saw my old friend, the gun vendor, displaying his ten-shilling weapons to an ignorant gaping crowd. By the by, since his last conversation with me, he has described his wares as fabricated after the *vrai modèle Anglais*. There were vendors of oxen, and vendors of butter; there were plenty of old screws being run up and down the dusty road to the tune of a cracking whip, though even this could hardly make

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the old cripples hobble. There were yearlings, and two-year old cart horses tethered in a row, which, for size and symmetry, were worth going some distance to see. One two-year old, especially, took my fancy, and around it were collected a band of dealers and their confederates, who were trying hard to take advantage of the ignorance of his owner, a poor Breton peasant. But the Breton shook his head, and answered their bits of *badinage* so readily, that I fancied he was pretty well aware of the value of his quadruped. The oxen were a fine, useful lot, and, when sold, will probably be sent to Portrieux, or some other port, to be shipped to Jersey and Guernsey, and there converted into English beef. Hence arises the idea so prevalent in the Breton mind, that England would be starved, in the case of a war stopping the supplies drawn from La belle Bretagne.

I never could appreciate the fishing in the immediate neighbourhood of Landivisiau, as netting and poaching are carried on to a greater extent in the Sizun River than any other in Brittany. If distance was no consideration, it would not be a bad place to stay at to fish the St. Thegonec River, which is to the north of Landivisiau, and could be easily reached by diligence in forty minutes. It is called the "Penzé" in the maps; and although it has been much injured by the Morlaix poachers, a fair day's sport may be had in early spring. The

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woods about St. Thegonec are much liked by the woodcocks, and although the poor birds are severely harassed by native shooters, they are seldom quite driven away or all destroyed. Then Landivisiau, as I said before, is a good shooting quarter in autumn, when a good walker can easily get up to the Commana and Sizun Communes, and make a good bag ere he return at nightfall to the Hotel de la Grande Maison. A stranger, too, will find the charges very reasonable, only five francs a-day being demanded by the civil landlady. I selected the diligence in preference to the malle-poste (which travels by night) to go from hence to Landernau; and it was a pleasant journey, of twelve miles, even in the higher regions of the *banquette*. On the left, was the rapid river, whose windings the new road discreetly followed; and on each side, were heather-clad hills, for the most part covered with wood as they sloped down to the water. There was an old castle or two in commanding situations, and plenty of projecting rocks on the sides of the uncultivated hills. Presently, the diligence passed the large canvas manufactory on the left of the road, and afterwards, a succession of villas and gardens, till it stopped at the Hotel de l'Europe, in the Grande Place of Landerneau. Opposite the Hotel (which, by the by, is one of the better class) is the quay, and a few coasting vessels, that coming up daily with the tide, are moored thereto. There is also a small,

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but clean, steamer, which goes daily to Brest, and returns the same day.

If I was obliged to live anywhere in Brittany, here, I think, I should elect to pitch my tent. The scenery is so pretty, the town so clean, and for the most part made up of new houses, while the price of living and lodging is anything but exorbitant. True it is, that the fishing "at the door" is, as I shall show presently, very indifferent, and the shooting in the immediate neighbourhood only moderate; but there are rivers at some little distance, and a country which can afford as good sport as any in Brittany. It is so easy to run down by diligence to such places as Pont de Buis, and Chateaulin, after rain has put the rivers into good fishing order, while Commana and Sizun, are to be compassed in a day's journey; and even La Feuillée is not out of bounds, if there is no objection to sleeping out.

At dinner I met many sporting denizens of the town who have followed the example of Englishmen, and become great fishermen,—at least, in their own estimation. Their baskets were on their backs, their English rods in their hands, as they entered the *salle-à-manger;* in fact, so wedded were they to their instruments of fishing that, like the parasols at the Eatanswill election, it was impossible to walk the streets of Landerneau, at any time, without seeing one or more of them. Should the day be Sunday, and the sun bright, you may count fifty gaudy individuals

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on the banks of the river, just outside the town. Then will they inflict an immense amount of flogging on the unresisting stream, and no wonder with but small results, considering that they invariably fish close together, and show themselves as much as possible. A capture of three little trout by one of the party will be a subject of conversation for a week at the *cafés*, whither, the successful candidate will bring his rod and basket, and recount his feat to a good humoured, never-tired audience. This, before the manufactory was built, was a first-rate salmon river; but if the Government will not take the matter in hand, the few fish that remain will be destroyed. The few that do pass the small weir to the right of the manufactory are sorely harassed by the natives armed with spears, and all kinds of nets. Sometimes the water is beat and "burnt" Highland fashion; in fact, every rascally device is called into play. There is, however, a sign of "a good time coming." Circulars have been sent round to the authorities, and competent (?) opinions taken as to the best methods of breeding and preserving the fish; in consequence of which, some say that there will be a jubilee for three years, and afterwards quite a new code of laws drawn up to protect the salmon.

The gunner will find that Landerneau has its advantages. I certainly did not think much of the partridge-shooting; but there are plenty of wood-

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cocks in winter. Besides, I saw on that large "salt lake" between Chateaulin and Brest, a good sprinkling of wild fowl, which might be brought to bag by a resident possessed of a boat, especially if built on Hawker's principle. But little could be done by any one shooting from the shore. There were naturally a great many people at a large town like Landerneau who were possessed of a *permis de chasse*, and if they had good dogs, and were more persevering, game would be much more scarce than at present. As it is, most Englishmen, with a decent brace of setters or spaniels, will bag double what their best shots can do. I stepped, of course, into the canvas manufactory, over whose mysteries, at that time, presided a Scotchman, who has since departed, and a Frenchman, from Paris, now reigns in his stead. An immense number of operatives were employed under the superintendance of Scotchmen, and the works were carried on by day and night. The flax was collected from all parts of the Continent; and even Russia contributed largely to the stock. They made up and sent to market no less than 7,000 tons annually. This will give an idea of the extent of the establishment, and the resources at command.

As my sport (?) in the fishing way was so poor at Landerneau, I shall forbear to issue any bulletins, but shall only say, that it seemed a sin that such a magnificent river should offer so little inducement to the enterprising angler. I was by this time quite

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tired of prosecuting my researches alone; and on the third night after my arrival, was quite glad to meet an amusing member of the travelling fraternity, who said he would accompany me to Daoulas on certain conditions, and fish the little river there. His terms were as follows, viz., I was to go to Brest with him on the morrow, and learn whether business would allow of his taking a holiday. I found him such a very quiet bagman, that I closed with his proposals at once. After dinner the subject of horses was introduced, and much *badinage* indulged in, by my friend and others, touching their respective steeds. Now, my friend was the proprietor of a very clever bay mare, and after much discussion was induced to back her to trot four miles in fifteen minutes, and she was to draw a heavy carriage at the same time. The event was for 40*l*., and to come off in a fortnight's time. Next morning we were both sitting behind the identical mare, the heroine of the preceding evening, and, on coming to a good piece of road, it was agreed to have a private trial. The mare in a moment settled down to her work, and by my watch, without any extraordinary effort, did the distance within the prescribed time. My companion was delighted, and I was greatly afraid, that he would divulge his secret on his return, and frighten the other side into paying forfeit. On the contrary, as I heard afterwards, he kept his own counsel, performed the feat, and, on receiving his money, offered to trot over the same course in one

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minute less time, which was respectfully declined. After the private trial, the mare was allowed to go quietly to Brest, and the bagman, meanwhile, found plenty of topics of conversation. He showed me his pea-rifle, which he carried ready, and loaded, in the back part of his vehicle. For be it known, he has invented a new kind of *chasse*, which he designates the "chasse aux chiens." He was, he told me, so frequently annoyed by large savage dogs on his travels, that he has now taken the law into his own hands, and shoots at them, whenever he can get an opportunity. He had a capital day's sport (?), he remarked, near Guingamp, the other day,—he bowled over four in seven shots. "But, did not the peasants say anything?" I asked. "Yes," said he; "and followed me too, but the mare beat them all, though one actually rode three miles after me." Without passing an opinion on his acts, I must say his idea was original. He confided to me that he had 5,000 francs in his vehicle; but, in the same breath, that he had a brace of pistols, close at hand, in case of accidents.

We discussed fishing, of course; and on this, as on everything else, he had his own idea. He would as soon think of dancing on the tight rope, as fishing with an artificial fly. "The worm at one end," as in the proverb, was the only true and legitimate system, which he satisfactorily proved as follows: "I accompany," he said, "a fly-fisher to the river, he takes one side, I the other; at the end of the

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day, plenty of trout have taken my worm and been caught; he catches nothing, and complains of his flies or the weather. *Voila tout.*" He pointed out a large, but rather weather-beaten, house on the road side. This was the rendezvous of the monied youth of Brest, who retired thither on high days and holidays, to discuss a good dinner, much as does young England at Greenwich. Altogether, I was sorry when he set me down in Brest, and left me, though I hope we may meet again. I am not going to take my readers round the "Fort Maritime," for the good reason that, as a stranger, I was debarred from seeing it. Nor shall I enlarge upon the fortifications, or discuss the chronicles of the convict establishment. Are they not written in Murray, and other works? There was one story, however, about the red and yellow-coated criminals, that I have never yet seen in print, and which, I think I may say, is really true. The prisoners work in gangs of, perhaps, twenty-four in number, and mess, and live together. There is a secret understanding between the individuals of this gang, that, each one is to have twenty-four hours per month in which he may make an attempt to escape; and that he is to be assisted by all his companions during this allotted period. If a prisoner does not avail himself of this opportunity, or is unsuccessful, he will not have another chance for a month. This may, perhaps, account for the great numbers that do get outside the prison walls, as I have before stated in my La Feuillèe chapter.

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CHAPTER XI.

On my return to Landerneau I found the dog-shooting bagman had, either taken counsel with his acquaintance respecting the chances of sport at Daoulas, or, received a letter from his "fidelis uxor," commanding an instant return to Morlaix. At all events, he declined either wetting a fly, or, more suo, impaling a worm at Daoulas; so his good little mare was driven along the Nothern-road, and the courier was left to me as the sole means of locomotion. In vain did madame, at the Hotel de l'Europe, try to stop my departure by telling wonderful stories of *la pêche*, and how that, if the weather was favourable, &c. &c., I should do wonders. I listened not to the syren's voice, but took my place in the Brest and Quimper malle-poste.

This was a great improvement on the "boxes on wheels," whose acquaintance I had so much cultivated in the interior of La Belle Bretagne. Up the inclines the horses trotted, and down hill, thanks to the break, they galloped. The stages were very short, and very little time was wasted in changing

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horses. I hardly know what pace they kept up throughout, but I fancy they must have done, on the average, at least ten miles an hour. I arrived, therefore, very soon at Daoulas, which is but eight miles from Landerneau, and found myself left in the middle of the road, with my rods and portmanteau, outside that little village. For the Inn was about a hundred yards from the main road; so I had to look for that useful article, a small boy, to shoulder my portmanteau and conduct me thither. I should compare the accommodation tendered to the traveller, at Daoulas with that of Commana, It may be a shade better, but not much. The price was certainly the same as Madame Huet asked, viz., two shillings per diem, inclusive of bottled beer. The communicative landlord brought in a tough cow-steak for dinner, and told me all he knew respecting the fishing; whereupon, I commenced hurling many anathemas against the kind friends who had sent me hither.

I do not mind an indifferent repast, or even the squalling of babies, though they sadly interrupt the meditation generally attendant on an after-dinner pipe. I do not mind a diminutive bedroom, even though certain little plagues do find their way therein, provided good sport is to be had. Now, I had been listening, all the winter, to the praises of Daoulas, and its salmon river, and on my arrival, I found that only three salmon had been killed

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that year, and that they were speared ere they entered fresh water. In the evening, the landlord showed me the place at the weir, where, during a flood, two or three pair of keen eyes are ever watching, and able hands ready to wield the spear that is to impale the unfortunate wanderer that attempts the passage. He also showed me some still water where there *might* be a salmon, but which I knew was unlikely enough, considering that its breadth was perhaps five yards, and its depth about two feet. I well knew that here the natives could and would capture any bold adventurer in five minutes. It was nothing, in fact, but a trout stream, and a very indifferent one, too; and I did feel myself quite an ill-used man, in being so wilfully misled by Bretons and French alike. Still, I fished the little stream from its source to its mouth, and had nothing to show but a few dozen little innocents. In my despair, I applied to a *gensd'armes*, who, business being slack, was in the act of setting night-lines, with which he expected to catch some trout of about the same calibre as those he saw in my basket. He informed me, that the little stream of L'Hopital was "bien poisonneuse," and that I could easily fish it from Daoulas or Le Faou. He also said that the Inn at the latter place was well-found in every respect. I went with him below the weir, where the tide being down, and the water clear, I could see a few sea-trout. In vain I tried them with different flies;

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they, as it were, laughed at the mockeries and delusions, turned up their white stomachs, and retired to their old holes with the air of gourmands not accustomed to be taken in. If the water had been a little discoloured, or the tide just on the ebb, I think I could have accounted for half-a-dozen good fish.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE same courier, that brought me hither, picked me up again, and, in the same expeditious manner, took me past the hamlet of L'Hopital to the village of Le Faou, about eight miles south-east of Daoulas. As the horses were changed at the principal Inn, I had nothing to do but descend, and on entering therein, select one, out of the many, empty dormitories. The man of war was right in praising the accommodation, as, I found it a very fair place (for Brittany) to stop at for a few days. The great drawback was, the late hour at which breakfast was put on the table, viz., mid-day, while dinner was not ready till seven, or even later. Such time might suit the interior economy of the Preceptor who boarded here. Like Pickwick's friend in the Fleet prison, who could make a light and airy breakfast off two cigars, he could allay the cravings of his appetite by sedulous attention to his black pipe. Such sustenance, however, was anything but satisfactory to an English stomach. So I was obliged to make advances to the fat landlady, who presided over her own pots and pans, and flatter her ex-

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ceedingly. Then, after many ejaculations at my unreasonable demands, and my resemblance to some Brown or Robinson (who, as coming from London I was expected to know, and who, in former days, applied the same arguments to madame), she agreed to give me my breakfast at any time I pleased. So, next day, when I came down early, I found the old lady waddling about her kitchen, and wheezing as though her heart was breaking. Still, her affliction did not prevent her serving up a capital beef-steak, and good Café-au-lait, for which she remembered the said Brown or Robinson, had, in former days, a great partiality.

I knew it was no use attempting to fish the little stream, that falls into the sea at Le Faou, as it is both small and shallow; so I put up my salmon flies, shouldered my rod, and started for Pont de Buis. My conductor, to-day, was a man somewhat advanced in years, with a tall gaunt figure, and a grim determined face. His shirt had long since disappeared, perhaps exchanged for inadequate remuneration in the shape of Eau-de-vie, and for which he certainly had some partiality. Straw bands were wound round his ancles, and his feet thrust into sabots; these he soon discarded, as his manner was, in olden time, when performing pedestrian journeys along the hilly roads of Brittany. He formerly belonged to the class of "runners," who were employed by the merchants in carrying parcels and letters of im-

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portance to their agents in the principal towns. There used to be a great many of them, but the introduction of the telegraph has diminished their numbers, as well as the profits of those that are left. It was really astonishing what distances these men could accomplish in twenty-four hours. There was one at Lannion, whose performances were as well known, as those of the London and Brighton stage coaches ere the railway put an end to them. Many a time has he started with the malle-poste, and arrived at his destination before that tolerably rapid vehicle. In the interior of Brittany I have often met them, sabots in hand, trotting up and down hill, breathing heavily, and evidently distressed, "yet all unconquered still." Never could I look on their pale, thin, angular countenances, and their restless eyes, without pity; for, such a strain on the constitution must necessarily shorten their lives by many years.

By my side stalked the ex-runner along the six miles of (old) road that separates Le Faou from Pont de Buis, where, by the by, there is no decent accommodation for man, whatever there may be for horse. On our arrival, he, quite needlessly pointed out the Government powder-mills, which, surrounded by a high white wall, were sufficiently self-evident to the most unpractised eye, and for which, the water of the river was pre-eminently useful. We visited the lower end of the great reservoir first, where there was a weir, to which the tide comes up, and

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where we saw the salmon-nets hanging to dry. We walked along the reservoir—still, deep, and with large stones at the bottom, where I was told that salmon were congregated *en masse (?)*, and of which, the managers of the mills, by emptying it in summer, will become the proprietors. I knew it was useless fishing this from the shore, and, as no boat was to be had, I passed on to the great fall at the upper end, which, by the by, must utterly bar the salmon from further progress. So as salmon-fishing was out of the question, I prepared for the humbler sport of trouting.

I ascended the left bank for miles, for the double purpose, of marking the best spots, and seeing the woods that I had heard so much of in connection with cock-shooting. There was no lack of the latter, on both sides of the river, even up to the miserable village of Braspars, and, I have no doubt, they are good preserves in winter-time; but then, who could rough it in an auberge in that village, when the "stormy winds do blow?" I fancy there are better, or, at least, quite as good, places to visit for this sport, without being obliged to resort to such a miserable locality. On this occasion my lucky star was not in the ascendant—a cold east wind blew most unkindly down the beautiful valleys, while hot sun hopelessly illumined the depths of the river. Consequently, I was honoured with what I call "South of France rises," when the fish

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just tumble over one's fly, without any intention of taking it. One good trout carried off a well-worn March brown (how the fish like an old and much-used fly), but, with that exception, I am sure I did not feel a good fish that day, and, on my return, I had only small fry to exhibit to my expectant landlady. I have never been lucky in my visits to this river, but have always had the wind and weather against me; yet I know enough about it to recommend it, and, when a stranger sees its beautiful runs, he will be seized with the same desire of fishing it as I have always had. It has the advantage of being flogged but little, and being removed from any town of size. If a fair trial were given, success would follow the attempt.

On my return that evening, I found the preceptor and a friend just returned from Chateaulin, where they had been to give an account of their stewardship. The former was fresh from that English stronghold, Dinan, and mournfully contrasted its gaieties with the dulness of Le Faou. Unluckily for me, he was not a fisherman, or he would have accompanied me, he said, on the morrow to the L'Hopital stream. He was a great *chasseur*, and, if it was the shooting season, he would have simply taken the precaution of fixing a notice of "Back again to-morrow," after the manner of a London barrister, to the door of his bureau, and leave his humble clients, who have, perhaps, come from the end of the canton, to mourn

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his absence. Still, I do not think that they are more to be pitied than us, when we attempt to do business in a French town. If we enter the premises of a wine-merchant, the domestic most likely will tell us, that Monsieur is absent, but will be back in half-an-hour. We must be very credulous to expect to see him in that time, considering that he is at a café, where his coffee will be followed by a cigar, and, perhaps, a game of dominos. The worst of it is, that this generally takes place in the middle of the day, when you would think he might do most business at home. I once asked a Frenchman, on seeing a café filled with merchants and others at this unreasonable hour, how it was that they could thus waste so much precious time? "Oh," said he, "over those cigars and coffee, the merchants and others are transacting their business, and, if a regular customer wanted to meet Mr. So-and-So, he would visit the principal cafés and look for him." This may be well enough, if I know my man of business by sight; but it is very hard on a stranger, when in such commercial cities as Bordeaux, Nantes, &c., he is kept waiting, or obliged to treat with some stupid clerk, who may know nothing, but will pretend, nevertheless, to be thoroughly *au fait*.

This evening, the strains of the Le Faou band, composed of amateurs, did not fall pleasantly on the ears of the preceptor and his friend, yet, I did not think they played so much amiss. They were

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performing in the town-hall, specially lent to them by the mayor for that purpose, and, nearly every evening, they were in the habit of meeting together, and treating the inhabitants to a taste of their instrumental powers. Every right thinking person will admit that this is far better employment for "ingenuous youth" than spending the evening in a public house. We might well adopt the system in some of our towns. Our domestic at the Inn, that night, was rather severe in criticising their instrumental efforts. She declared that they played the same air every evening, and that their execution was, now, no better than when they began.

On the morrow, I was up betimes; and the dear old lady wheezed terribly over the fabrication of the coffee, which, when made, turned out to be excellent —the best, I may say, that I have tasted for many a long day. The secret of its goodness lay simply in the roasting the berry in a cylinder *every morning;* hence, the coffee was always fresh, and had lost none of its aroma. I have often wished that they would introduce the cylinders, with the charcoal fires underneath, and the small boy to turn it, more generally into England, and thus afford us a good cup of coffee sometimes; but I am afraid the day is far distant when I shall be able to see, in the old country, something like what I could, every morning, from my window in one of the principal Pyrenean hotels. This was a poor idiot boy, who was

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employed in turning one of these cylinders for hours together. He never took his eyes off the heavens, and he never ceased singing a wild Bearnais air, to which the machine moved in unison.

When the coffee and the beef-steak had been duly done justice to, I went outside, and found the ex-runner waiting to conduct me to the L'Hopital stream. There was a light "southerly wind, and a cloudy sky," with just an occasional gleam of sunshine —in fact, the *beau ideal* of a fishing morning. We took the north country road to Sizun, until we came to a little bridge about four miles south of that beautiful (?) town, and then followed the course of the brook. It was encumbered on both sides with trees, which fact accounted, perhaps, for the number of trout I found therein. Every hole, I put my fly into, produced at least a rise, and I began to think, what destruction the worm-fishing dog-shooter of Landerneau would perpetrate, if he came hither after heavy rain. The ex-runner waxed quite enthusiastic as he saw, one after another, taken out of the water, and quite condoled with me, as though he really felt the loss, when a speckled trout slipped off the hook. He was in positive ecstacies when, on fishing the deep pool below the bridge of the old Le Faou and Landerneau road, I hooked a respectable fish. Down he went, on his knees, by the water, and kept the landing-net ready, as though he had been accustomed from his youth

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to handle such an implement. After one failure, he managed to scoop out the half-drowned trout and to lay him on the bank, and then followed such a torrent of exclamations and *"par exemples"* as none but an inhabitant of La Belle France could pour forth. The fish was indeed worthy of some of the ex-runner's enthusiasm, as he weighed more than two pounds French, and was in beautiful condition. On descending the river I came upon a certain pathless wood, through which it was difficult to make any way, encumbered as I was with rod and flies; had I not had a capital day's sport I might have lost my temper when trying to thread its intricacies. Soon after my emancipation from these sylvan shades, I found that the stream, (which, by the by, is very small even at its mouth,) joined the Lake of Brest below the little hamlet of L'Hopital. I had nearly forgotten to say, that this was one of the salmon rivers (?) that an omniscient Frenchman told me of, and recommended me to visit. I might say, that if a brace of those foolish fish annually deposited their spawn in the L'Hopital waters, it is quite as many as ever patronised the two holes, and the only two which could by any possibility, harbour them. I should have no hesitation in saying that, after an April shower, my bagman friend might catch his fifty brace of all-sized trout with his seductive worm-bait.

The shooting at Daoulas L'Hopital and Le Faou is all on a par, and is, perhaps, a happy medium

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between bad and good. It is not so good as in the interior, on account of the numerous pot-hunters that dwell thereabouts, who sell their game to the conductors of the diligences. Besides, there are the men of Landerneau ever ready to pounce down on these districts, and destroy what they can. In spite of both, however, the partridges are not scarce, and cocks are abundant; but certain of the woods are supposed to be preserved; so permission must be asked of the proprietor ere we enter therein. I was tired, that evening, after the long walk from L'Hopital to Le Faou, which was rather a severe finale to the labours of the day. The evening cigar in front of the Le Faou Inn was particularly grateful, but I was not long allowed to remain quiet. In fact, I may ask, when do the Bretons leave you alone, and not interrogate you on every conceivable point? This evening a stranger accosted me, and hoped I would allow him to take my measure, as he had made a bet that I was taller than a certain *gensd'armes*, who I had often seen lounging in the market-place. On my giving my assent, he produced a large carving-knife, and fixed it into the door above my head. I was *so* happy to find that he had lost his wager, and to see him retiring amidst the laughter of his companions to the café, where the money won was to be invested in sundry bottles of wine.

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CHAPTER XIII.

I soon afterwards bid the landlady of Le Faou a long, but not a last, adieu; and, having first compounded with her for four francs and a half per diem, which included payment for the excellent coffee before-mentioned, I took my place in the courier, and started for Chateaulin. Now, from what I had previously heard, I expected to find a city on the banks of the Aulne, and that city called Chateaulin. For had not the natives spoken of it with awe? Were not the prisoners forwarded there from all parts? Did not a *sous-prefet* exist there, whose dashing equipages, "more Anglico," were the wonder and delight of half Finisterre? Was it not marked in the map in capital letters? Judge, then, of my surprise, after traversing that well-engineered route, that happily takes the traveller round, instead of over hills, for about thirteen miles, I stumbled upon an insignificant, though well-built village, and was told that that was Chateaulin. It might, perhaps, boast of some 1800 inhabitants, a small portion of which were aspirants to the title of salmon-fishers; for in the river, or rather canal

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Aulne, they are accustomed to throw the fly with some pertinacity. It was the continuation of my old friend the Carhaix canal, that was here no longer insignificant, but of great volume and importance. The hotel was hardly good, but certainly not bad; the tolerable quality and quantity of the refreshments being mainly due to the large number of *pensionaires* who daily broke bread therein.

The weather had now become very unkind, and I was obliged to make arrangements for a start at a very early hour. This seemed to be the only chance I had of obtaining any sport, now that fine summer weather had fairly set in. So, at four o'clock, I was away under friendly (?) guidance, and on the road to the first lock. I put a query to the word friendly, for I hardly think the *proprietaire*, my guardian, did act as a good Samaritan should. For, no sooner had we arrived at our destination, than he put on his fly, and fished the best part of the fall before me. By the by, he met with his reward, as some people do in this world, for he, almost immediately, hooked a good salmon, and lost him about two minutes afterwards. There is a very high fall by this first lock. Over this, the fish cannot leap; and I saw many making the attempt, but yet, none could get within two feet of the top. Below the fall, there was at least a mile of still water, all inhabited by the prince of fish, but, this morning, unruffled by a breath of air,

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and so it was of no use to fish it. I walked quietly home at nine o'clock without having had a rise, which my guardian (when he was not talking about the fish he lost) attributed to the sombre colour of my flies. He was probably right, as the water, when there is no flood, is anything but clear, and a gaudy Scotch fly would be far more effective than our quiet Brittany fabrications. It was a mortifying thing in that merry month of May, to see the hot weather set in, and the water fall as rapidly as in summer. It was still more so to see the native piscator mount his bait of worms (of which I have a holy horror, but will write about presently), and catch a monster, when I could not get a rise. That sight, in fact, drove me away to other "fishing" grounds, whither I went with a sort of vague hope of changing place, weather, and luck. The young men of Chateaulin are much given to the *chasse*, and perambulate the hot close town, morning, noon, and perhaps, night, with canine quadrupeds at their heels, and sporting habiliments on their backs. I pity both man and beast on those hot September days, when they toil over that hilly wild country in pursuit of partridges, here not over abundant. Chateaulin has some pretensions to the title of a fishing-station, but to the shooter it can offer but little to induce him to pay it a visit. In bad spirits I paid mine host his demand of five francs per diem, and took a place in the diligence for Quimper.

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This fine town is, as Murray informs us, the ancient capital of Finisterre, and about eighteen miles south of Chateaulin. Its fishings and its shootings have been the theme of praise for many a pen, and other English, in former days, have said at the conclusion of successful forays,

"Hœc olim meminisse juvabit."

But its glories have departed, and "Fuit Ilium" is all that can now be said of it by the faithful chronicler. The trout were, at the time of my visit, few and far between; the salmon either not to be found, or else disinclined to take the fly; and the partridges had been obliged to succumb to the multitude of persecutors. The woodcocks still pay their annual visits to the woods that overhang the river; but the proprietors like to retain the right of shooting them. Adventurous sportsmen might like to go hence to Douarnenez and fish for the denizens of the ocean; but such sport not being to my taste, I do not enlarge thereupon. No, I knew that poverty and sport in Brittany went hand in hand; and one glance at the Hotel d'Epee and its gorgeous apartments—one glance at the fine buildings and the inhabitants—were sufficient to warn me that I must go further a-field in search of sport. In fact, I looked upon Quimper, as a kind of change after mountain fare and outlandish quarters, a place where civilisation, repre-

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sented by the chimney-pot black hat and sable coat, was to be courted and enjoyed. So I did not linger there, but, after a short stay, bid it farewell.

I have now visited all the chief places on, what I call, the Western Circuit. I shall now transport the reader back again to the capital of the Chouans, viz., old Carhaix, whence we will start afresh, and "see what we shall see," in the southern districts of Lower Brittany.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A DILIGENCE starts daily, or rather nightly, from Morlaix to L'Orient, *vid* Carhaix, Gourin, Le Faouet, and Quimperlé. In this I had taken a place for the small village called Gourin, and at the uncompromising hour of nine at night (when do the public conveyances in Brittany start at a respectable hour?) I presented myself at the bureau. Unfortunately, all the seats were engaged, except one, between the conductor and driver; so here I was obliged to sit in fear of falling, if I moved forward, on the horses' backs, or if I leant back, of relapsing into some bagman's capacious waistcoat. I was, consequently, evenly balanced between two impending dangers. I pass over the slight inconveniences of receiving the puffs of smoke from the driver's pipe in my face, and enjoying the refined odour of the conductor's supper—to wit, bread and onions—every time I turned my face. To have cared for such trifles would have shown great want of that enduring power, which every one who travels amongst the bold Bretons, must possess. Still, the miseries of this diligence were as nothing, compared

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to those, of its venerable predecessor. That was made of boards, and very badly put together. It creaked, it rolled, it let in the wind, and was a laughing-stock even to the aboriginal natives of Carhaix. How well I can remember, in the times gone by, my fitful dreams by the side of the fusty smoke-dried conductor, who, at one moment, was opening the door, and letting in the cold night air, that he might drop his *depéches* at some wayside hamlet; who, at another, was jumping out to extricate the poor old thing from some ditch it had inadvertently entered; and who, at intervals, snored as only a native can.

Let byegones be byegones: I had to-night a new diligence, and a new road to travel on to Gourin, and was thankful. It was a pity that daylight did not attend me, and give me a parting view of the localities, where I had lately made acquaintance with the finny tribe. I could, by the light of the moon, just discern the sluggish waters of the Carhaix River, as it quietly wound its way down to the canal. I could just see the yellow surface of the latter, up to where the trout-teeming stream of Gourin joined it, when it was lost to sight. After this, I saw nothing but the brown heather of the Menez Arres Hills, as the diligence slowly crawled up the steep ascent. Then the break was put on, the horses woke up, trotted, and scrambled along, even unto the little village of Gourin. Very

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respectably, I must say, did the said quadrupeds perform their ten miles. I was soon released from my miserable perch, and glad to enter the snug little inn, and meet the obliging landlord, so well known in these parts to the patrons of the *chasse*. Now, no one ever dreamt of staying at Gourin for fishing, although there is a small stream in its vicinity, and rarely troubled by country anglers or amateurs. For its shooting, it justly enjoys a good reputation, but is almost unknown to the world at large. The red, the grey, and the roquette partridge all abound in this neighbourhood, and their pursuit is unattended by any trouble, provided that the landlord of the hotel interests himself in your favour. In November, however, and December I found it as well to make friends with the mayor, who preserved certain woods, and who gave permission to shoot therein without the slightest hesitation. The landlord was very moderate in his demands on my purse, and contrasted favourably with those of the Carhaix "Cormorant," who, at the Latour d'Auvergne, has so often given cause of complaint to myself and others. Four francs per diem covered the main expenses, and I only regretted I could not make a longer stay.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE L'Orient diligence again picked me up in the witching hours of night, or rather at two o'clock in the morning, and, after twelve miles of rather hilly road, set me down at the Lion d'Or Hotel at Le Faouet. A considerable noise at the portal brought mine host to the fore, looking both sleepy and cross at being so unceremoniously aroused at that unbecoming time. Luckily for me, there was yet a tolerable room, that the bagmen, who just then swarmed in the provinces, had not engaged. The landlord having introduced me into this, with many apologies for its size, retreated to his couch.

I really thought I had libelled this dear old town, when, in the pages of the "Sporting Magazine," I described it as a nest of poachers. Since that time I had held grave discussions with Frenchmen deeply versed in *chasse*-craft, and had conversed with the intrepid *pêcheur*, and been quietly told that my statistics were wrong, and my facts misstated. So a second and a third time did I go thither, and, with the best opportunities of judging, I must still adhere to my former statements with but little

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qualification. As regards the game, at no place in Brittany do the peasants show more skill in setting snares for both partridges and woodcocks; and ocular demonstration may be had, any time in the shooting season, of the number of wires set for hares. Unless you go some distance from the town—to Melan for instance, on the Plouar road, or some kilometres on the Gourin road—the bag will be but light at the conclusion of the day. In fact, when I returned the last time to the old Lion d'Or, I heard the same story that they had told me three years before, "that even the poachers often went out, without having the opportunity of firing off their guns at game," to the truth of which, at that time, I could bear testimony.

To judge from the present state of the rivers that flow near Le Faouet, I should say, that the love of destruction ran in the blood of the inhabitants. Night-lines, netting—Netting, night-lines, traces of one or the other met me at every step, and made me almost turn away therefrom without wetting a line. Still, the fishing, with all its drawbacks, is better than the shooting. How long this will be the case I cannot venture to predict.

On the morning after my arrival, I paid a visit to an old friend, the river that comes from the hills about Gourin. I joined it at the new bridge on the Scaer road, and fished up stream for about half a mile. I never saw it in better order than on this

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occasion, it having a good body of water, and being slightly discoloured. The trees would, perhaps, have discouraged a tyro in Brittany, but, for myself, I would much sooner take some trouble, and learn to throw in the most cramped places, or even lose a fly or two per diem, than confine myself to the open spots, where the fish are scarce and shy. I had pretty good luck on this half mile of river, until I came to the miller's tenement, where, I knew it was best to stop, unless I was anxious to fish still water and catch dace. So I turned into the mill, and found the same people there, with whom I had made acquaintance two years before. They received me with all the cordiality possible, and showed me, how they had increased their stock of night-lines and nets, since I was last in their house. They told me how very useful the two dry summers of 1857 and 1858 had been to them, and what quantities of fish they had taken, when the water was so unusually low. They showed me a three pound trout, which they had caught that night in the very place I was then fishing; but they had not caught them all, for on descending in company with the miller's boy, I managed to take three or four very fair specimens. Perhaps the change in my luck was owing to the precocious knowledge of that imp of mischief. He had been the leader of trout-destroying parties for the last two years, and knew the depth and length of every hole, and where the stream had hollowed out

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the bank, and, so could point out just the spot where it was necessary to drop my fly. I paid a second visit to the beautiful run below the *Scaer* bridge, (where in olden times I had caught a grilse, but which, now, as far as salmon are concerned, is tenantless,) and caught half a dozen trout on the side where the trees hang over. From this point, to the bridge on the Quimperlé road, there is ample space for an angler to show his powers, and plenty of opportunities of hanging up his "March brown" in the willow-tree. For my basket of trout, some of which were hardly fit to be taken out, I only lost one casting-line. This is rather a consideration in a country, where, good gut is not to be bought or borrowed. In this way I fished round Le Faouet, and, on arriving at the Quimperlé bridge, had only two miles to walk to my dinner. Now, that same repast I cannot praise, nor the people that did justice to it; for the former was meagre in the extreme, and the latter a very rough and ready assemblage. But, when in Brittany, I always make up my mind to like what the Bretons like, and, as I find them, so I treat them.

I ought to have treated the great river with more respect, and, on account of its size, mentioned it first; but I did not do so, as I think very little of its capabilities. Above St. Barbes, it falls over rocks and stones, looking remarkably picturesque, especially as it wound for several kilometres, through

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heathery hills and the wildest scenery. But the fish, alas! were small, and the holes had been, doubtless, well "laded" by the Breton gang last summer; so I laid down my rod, and thought over the plans of certain speculative Englishmen who came hither with me before, and wondered what they thought *now* about the castles in the air that they then built. Speculator No. 1 had thought of burning the heather, importing English sheep, and turning the low ground into arable. He had mused upon the subject, made some enquiries, and was half inclined to investment. The idea haunted him perhaps for a month, when it grew fainter and fainter, as the recollection of tender ties at home rose up within him. The subject, never is broached now by him, save over a bottle of old port wine, before a few select friends, who will shake their heads, and hint at revolutions, and other slight peculiarities incidental to the tenure of landed property in La Belle France. Speculator No. 2 went further into the business. He conversed with the authorities touching the purchase of the said hills, won over to his side the mayors of two or three *communes*, and only desisted, when he had clearly understood the difficulty of transacting business with Bretons, and making them work. I thought, if Speculator No. 3 would appear on the scene, and grapple manfully with the difficulty, that at no distant day, when the railways are introduced,

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he would undoubtedly make a fortune; but the individual—the pioneer of civilisation—has not yet stepped forward: it is only one or two companies, formed in Paris, that have made some feeble attempts at Brittany Landes regeneration.

Apropos to this, I can never forget the advice of a sexagenarian to a young gentleman, who was throwing away his fifty pound notes in backing horses, too often, never meant to win. "Why will you not," said he, "give up racing, and invest that surplus capital in an Irish estate? (the old gentleman hailed from Paddyland, and the time was the year after the famine;) depend upon it, you will see such an investment trebled in value in a short time." The old patriarch has done as he advised others, and now lives to see his prophecy fulfilled. The young gentleman who listened, but heeded not, where is he, or what does he think of the chance thrown away? I do not think it requires great foresight to perceive that the same results will attend an investment here. I picked up my rod again, and rambled down below St. Barbes (a church overhanging the *old* road to Plouar), and fished the two crack places in this part of the river. To-day, there were natives on the bridge peering into the dark hole below, for the report had spread that half-a-dozen salmon had come up in the late flood, and these individuals were anxiously awaiting an opportunity for taking them out; so, I passed on, after exchanging

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the usual salutations. From thence, it was a case of *facilis descensus*, from bad to worse. Above, there were plenty of little trout, and some excitement could be obtained by repeatedly throwing them over one's head, but, below, the little trout had been ousted by manifold dace, who took the fly greedily, and put me out of temper oftener than was good.

The pleasantest day I passed in this neighbourhood, was on the stream, that joined its big brother at the bridge on the *new* Plouar road, just two miles from Le Faouet. At early morn, I commenced my pilgrimage along banks that were free from trees, but by a stream where the dace, as well as trout, would pay court to my fly. I knew that, this morning, nobody was fishing in advance, otherwise I should not have seen that roe-deer, which rose at my approach, and went leisurely off to its native fastnesses at about the same pace as a four-months-old calf might be supposed to manage. I put up a brace of birds, too, on the bank. This made assurance doubly sure that the natives, for this day at least, were asleep. Presently, the river began to tumble over rocks and cascades, such as I've seen in Pyrenean and other mountain streams, and I entered a gorge which for scenery, is, perhaps, unique in Brittany. It far surpasses in beauty the gorge that leads to the cascades of St. Herbot, which so many English pilgrims go out of their way to visit. The deep and dark pools were well adapted for spinning the

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minnow, or insinuating the fascinating cricket bait, but hardly good for fly-fishing. So I ascended at least a mile higher, and stumbled on much happier fishing-ground. I met here a pleasant miller, who, fascinated by a present of tobacco and a *goatte* of brandy, accompanied me on my journey upwards. I fished, *auspice* miller, the numerous runs with tolerable success, and made him frantic with delight on landing a big-headed, bad-conditioned trout, of over a pound weight. By the time that I had arrived at the spot where the stream became insignificant, I had as much as I cared to carry on this warm April day.

Now, I recommend any future visitor to reverse this order of things, and to leave Le Faouet by the *old* Plouar road, when, after a four miles walk, he will be on the best part of the water, and he may fish up first, and afterwards descend as far as he can. At the same time, rain should have fallen previously, otherwise his success will be very problematical. The bagmen were congregated *en masse* at the prandial banquet on my return, and were seasoning that repast with the very worst of jokes. Yet, perhaps, they were necessary companions to the thin soup and tough veal, which form the *pieces de resistance* of a Le Faouet dinner. However, three shillings a day was not much to pay for what the landlady offered me, so I will not complain too much.

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CHAPTER XVI.

One of the visitors to Le Faouet was to start for Quimperlé next morning, and he so kindly pressed me to take a place in his vehicle, that I could not but accept his invitation. He had met me before, and knew me well, although I could scarcely recollect his face. Really, it is quite wonderful what a crop of acquaintances springs up in this country, so much so as to fully carry out the old adage, that, "many more know Tom fool, than Tom fool knows." My memory is indeed taxed to remember under what roof or circumstances I met such and such peasant, or coiffed dame, of humble origin. I shake hands, however, with each, and answer their questions, and hope not to make any mistake in my enquiries respecting themselves or families. To-day it was a *gensd'arme* who fairly puzzled me, until he mentioned Chateaulaudren, and then enlightened me as to his identity. He detained me, a long time, telling me how tired he was of a policeman's life, and that he was anxious to find a gentleman, whose horse required the care, that an ex-cavalry private could bestow.

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I mounted the bagman's vehicle, and jogged along the fine road to Quimperlé, which is not more than thirteen miles from Le Faouet. I was agreeably surprised to find that my charioteer could speak English, which he had picked up in a two years' visit to London and Southampton. His trip had done him much good, and had brought out the intelligence, which, most Frenchmen possess, though it is sadly dimmed by continuous residence among their compatriots, whose conversation rarely touches on, any other but, conventional topics. He was a thorough-going Republican, and gave me the benefit of his ideas with a freedom which would, assuredly, render him liable to a domiciliary visit from Mons. le Commissaire de Police, if he exercised his tongue in public, as he did to me on this occasion. I more than hinted this to him, and told him of a gentleman in the south of France, whose good qualities rendered him deservedly popular, but who was foolish enough to talk openly against the Emperor, and condemn many of his acts. One fine morning, this said gentleman positively disappeared; his fine chateau and property were handed over in trust to the authorities, and, from that day to this, he has never been heard of. Shrewd guesses were made of his probable destination, and people spoke in bated breath of his disappearance, but nothing more was ever actually known respecting his fate.

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We had only one glance at the fine salmon river that runs down to Quimperlé, and that was very near the great pool that the English used to visit in former days, and fish with success. Would that they could do the same in these degenerate times. On the right, as I entered Quimperlé, I saw the little trout stream, which afterwards yielded me some small fry, and which they *say* harbours several salmon. I will not contradict my authority on this subject, but he did not add that he ever caught any therein.

Mons. Racine was at the portal of the Hotel des Voyageurs ready to receive us, while the African warrior (a proprietor in the neighbourhood, and almost always at the Hotel), was prepared with his jokes at dinner, and his invitations to fishing and shooting parties afterwards. I fared sumptuously, and paid at the rate of five francs and a half per diem, and would have been very contented, had the fishing equalled the prospects, long since, held out to me. But, (oh, these buts!) the best casts in the big river were all rented by an Englishman, and the remainder thrashed into foam by the native fishermen. So, I had no choice but to ask permission of the former, or share the chances of the latter. I preferred the last named, and did nothing; more, I think, from a sort of prejudice I always had against the river, and consequent want of perseverance on my part. True, on a former occasion, I managed to

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catch a grilse in the same water, and was much complimented on achieving such a magnificent feat (?). This, perhaps, ought to have made me persevere more, instead of betaking myself prematurely to the African warrior's trout-stream, that I mentioned as having seen on entering the town.

The multitude of *chasseurs* is the principal drawback that the shooter has to contend against, otherwise, the woodcocks would afford capital sport. But alas! now, no matter what the morning may be like, the tinkling bells, attached to the necks of various mongrels, may be heard along the different roads leading out of the town; while their owners, with guns slung jauntily across their shoulders, and pipe in mouth, will be met following their dogs at a respectful distance. Albeit, the woods are numerous and easily beaten; so, at the commencement of November, something respectable, in the shape of a bag, may be made. I am not myself partial to Quimperlé, looking at it in the light of a sporting station, and have always, much to Mons. Racine's disgust, left his well-ordered establishment rather abruptly. Yet I might on several occasions have accompanied the "African warrior" to shoot roe, of which there are a sprinkling in the woods on the road to Le Faouet, and elsewhere; but I never could see any pleasure in standing the live-long day, half petrified in the worst pass on the chance of seeing a *chevreuil*. For, although the French sportsmen go

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out very often, they really do not kill more than three or four a year. On this occasion, I did not waste much time on this *sport*, but having bid farewell to my friends, took a place in one of the three ponderous diligences that daily visit Rosporden.

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CHAPTER XVII.

ROSPORDEN is some sixteen miles from Quimperlé, and the diligence performs that distance in about two hours. On the road I passed Bannalec, by which a little stream runs, but, of no use, to the itinerant angler. *On dit,* that its ancient inhabitants were only black trout, so, their absence is not much to be regretted. I certainly expected to have found Rosporden to be a large and flourishing town, from the way its position was marked in the map, and I was agreeably surprised to find it but a small village built on a lake, and boasting of two, as good little hotels, as any to be found in Brittany. The diligence stopped at the Hotel de la Poste, but a little bird had whispered glad tidings to me respecting the other establishment, kept by Mons. Collet, to which I went accordingly. I found that I had not been misinformed, and was delighted with the good rooms, and capital dinners, served up by the most considerate of landladies. Besides, there were here no dirty kitchen floors to offend the British eye. In fact, I believe, that, after the departure of every Breton peasant, that had taken the trouble to dust

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his feet, or drop the ashes of his pipe on the floor, the broom was put into requisition, and the incumbrances swept off. In fact, "Siste viator" ought to have been written over the threshold;—I should like to have painted the words there myself.

I had now tumbled on a country of large enclosures, broom-fields, and other characteristics of a game district. There were woods for the cocks, (and only two of them preserved) and covers for hares; in fact, it was a little Elysium for the carrier of a gun, and I tremble, when I put this on paper, for fear, that wandering tourists will spoil, even this, far distant spot. So be kind, future visitors to this little place,—be a little lenient to the game, and set not the Breton peasant, here as well as elsewhere, against you by too wholesale destruction of his country's treasures! The best guide to these was an old man, who rejoiced in the name of Jean Marie. He was a poacher by profession, knew every field and corner in the country, and the only regular *chasseur* in the district. He considered himself a good dog-breaker, but, the less said about this part of his trade the better.

On the morning after my arrival I sent for Jean Marie, who had been, as usual, very drunk the night before, to guide me to Elliant, a little village on the river Ger. He was, after great trouble, roused from his slumbers, and came to the Inn with the most sheepish, woe-begone face I had

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ever seen. Still, he volunteered to walk the four miles, and as far down the river afterwards as I liked; so we slung baskets, and departed. Now, the river Ger looked rather imposing on the map, but that had not impressed me half so much, as the wonderful stories told, of its capabilities for affording a good day's sport. On arriving, I found it to be a small stream, very full of little trout I admit, but, literally hemmed in with trees. There was, frequently no room to move one's rod, much less, put a fly into the water. My miseries were further aggravated by the conduct of that man Jean Marie, who put me on the wrong side of the stream and reserved the more open bank for himself. I retaliated by taking his water, and leading him down the river nearly to Quimper—a journey that made that worthy, not as yet recovered from his last night's wine-party, cry out "Peccavi." Small trout, however, were my only reward. Had there been but a little rain previously, I think I might have taken certain elderly fish, that I occasionally had a glimpse of. Oh, the wretched Jean Marie, as we toiled along the Quimper and Rosporden road on our homeward tour, how he gradually died out, and how he forgot to tell me any more stories about hares, foxes, and woodcocks. Perhaps, that walk may give him a taste for sobriety in future.

On the morrow, that worthy was in bed when I sent for him; so, being disinclined, at this time

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of year, to fish for pike in the Rosporden lake, I went, alone, to the Pont Aven river. This once boasted a salmon river, and was, till very lately, a good trouting stream; but, last year, the natives set all kinds of traps for trout and would have quite depopulated it, had not the *garde chasse* fallen upon them, and sent them to Quimper to be fined, should the judge think fit. So, I was not surprised at having a blank day, or rather, what I consider to be such, and I shall look forward to the time when the trout will have increased after a year or two's rest and quiet. But the country about Pont Aven is, nearly as good as Rosporden, for partridge and cock-shooting, and should be visited by every one who makes Quimperlé or Rosporden his head-quarters.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

If it is any pleasure to look over a French sea-port, it is very easy to go from Quimperlé to L'Orient. As I do not admire a place that holds out no prospect of sporting, that is full of, nought but, soldiers and sailors, and that has a bad hotel, and a landlady more proud than rich, I avoided it as much as possible. So, having engaged a carriage for five shillings, I branched off from the L'Orient high road, and went to the village of Pont Scorff.

I could not see that this village was different to other Breton towns. It presented that same "washed out" appearance, so peculiar to the Brittany tenements. Its beggars were certainly less numerous than elsewhere—a fact easily explained by the absence of victims on this departmental cross-road. Depend upon it, if there was a chance of profit, the generation of professional alm-seekers would be indefinitely multiplied. It was a Hotel des Voyageurs that on arriving greeted my eye, and it is quite good enough for any one to make his home for a short period. It is kept by an eminent *chasseur*, and the

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creature comforts are looked to by a landlady, whose only error is certainly a grave one,—viz., an affection for ardent spirits. Perhaps the "*Descente des Voyageurs,*" a new Inn in Pont Neuf, might be found more comfortable, but I can only bear testimony to its clean exterior, and can say nothing about its domestic economy.

The same amount of sporting I found could be had here, as in other places on the Southern Circuit. Partridges were scarce, woodcocks plentiful, hares and rabbits few, a roe-deer seen once or twice in a lifetime, a wild boar *never*. There were splendid woods by the river, which, unfortunately, the L'Orient sportsmen knew too well, and visited accordingly in the cock season. There were, besides, twenty-five native sportsmen who took out licenses; so that, a stranger must not expect to have it all to himself, when November comes round. N.B.—Pont Scorff being in the Morbihan department, the law graciously permits us to hunt birds of passage with *dogs* up to the 1st of April. Now, March is the best month for salmon-fishing in the Scorff; so, I think, it would be possible to rival the old Yorkshire Squire's feat, when he killed a fox and two salmon on the same day, by catching a salmon in the Scorff river, and bagging two couple of woodcocks on its banks, between sunrise and sunset. Perhaps of the two, the latter performance would be the most remarkable. I must linger longer on the banks of the Scorff than

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on some other rivers, as salmon really exist in it, and are often caught with the fly.

The Scorff is a large river, and rises on the other side of a town called Guemené. From thence, to Pont Scorff, it does not flow past a single village or town, but just keeps the even tenour of its way (except in a flood) amidst moorlands, and beautiful scenery. The tide comes up to the bridge of Pont Neuf, and here, as by law established, is it permitted unto the natives to use their nets for the capture of salmon. On descending the hill, I saw the latter all prepared for action, *i.e.*, stretched between four poles in mid air, and ready for immersion in the water. They were then lowered, so as to command the entrance to each arch in the bridge, and the proprietor took up his position to watch for a victim hardy enough to attempt the passage. Directly his practised eye perceived a fish over his net, it was hoisted into the air, and then into the road, where the poor victim was quickly despatched. The fishermen could, of course, only work their engines of destruction by daylight, or, when the water was not discoloured by a flood, or, when the tide was down. Lower down the river, and in the tidal way, there was a flotilla of boats, in each of which, a man and woman, twice in the twenty-four hours, performed their arduous work. They belonged to that class of sailors who have only served half their time in Government vessels, and so, were liable to be called on at any moment, should the necessities

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of the State require their services. "One day we missed them from their accustomed seat" in this merry month of May, when, war being declared, the boats were left to rot in the mud, and the male owners were on their way to swell the maritime forces of La Belle France. In peace time their operations were conducted as follows. As the tide fell each boat was moored in mid-stream. From the side of each boat projected two poles, about thirteen feet in length, between which was stretched a fine net. This apparatus was lowered into the water, and allowed to stay there about two minutes. At a preconcerted signal the poles were jerked up, and the fish, whom the tide had gradually compelled to recede down stream, when passing in fancied security over this trap, is literally in the hands of his captors in about twenty seconds. Six, was the greatest number ever known to be caught at one haul, but often, the poor people work for a whole week, and take but one fish. To me it seemed extraordinary, that, any capture was ever made by means of so shallow an artifice. These were the only two systems in vogue for the destruction of Scorff *salmon*. If the millers would abstain from catching the fry in nets for the purpose of feeding their pigs, there would be scarcely a better river in Brittany.

I said before, that the Scorff season was at its height in February, and March, and I arrived there at an inopportune moment, in the sunny month of May. When I saw the cloudless sky, the low

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state of the water, and found myself listlessly lounging instead of fishing by Pont Scorffian banks, I felt very much like that party of four Liverpudlians (what an irreverent name!) that I remember seeing at a fishing station in North Wales in the blazing heat of July. They were waiting for a spate, as it is technically termed, and had as much chance of seeing a flood of gold as of rain. If an immoderate use of tobacco, numerous hard words, and frequent visits to a transparent pool could have done any good, those worthies would have had their desires gratified immediately. So, in vain, did I visit the cast above the first mill, or the cast above the small rock that stands in the pool above the second mill. If a fish moved, and that was but seldom, it was only to tumble lazily over the fly, and return to his native depths once more. I went up to the little village of Arseno more than once, and hired a small boy, for the magnificent sum of twopence, to show me the intricate paths that led to the salmon pools so much loved by the native fishermen of Pont Scorff. There was not even a ripple on the water, and, I think, I might, in some places, have counted the stones at the bottom, so I wiled away the time in conversation with the sulky fishermen, who were half asleep on the banks. I looked at their queer flies, (a bundle of worsted and no wings), and their stiff poles in the place of rods, and wondered how, with such tackle, they could catch ten or fifteen salmon, each, per season. On these occasions, I found

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them bobbing for tench: in the evenings, I always found them patiently fishing for the salmon. This water, below Arseno, was very likely-looking, and I did rise a fine fellow in the presence of the sulky fishermen. I wonder whether they caught him afterwards with the worm bait?—alas! I fear so.

Higher up above the bridge, on the road from Arseno to Plouar, I found, one day, the great professor of Quimperlé reclining under a wide spreading beech-tree, and enjoying the contents of a case bottle, to which he was much attached. He was the best salmon-fisher in the country, and loved these two pools, where I found him, more than any other on the river. He caught there four good fish in twelve hours, just before my arrival at Pont Scorff. This brought up his sum total for the year to twenty-six. He fully expected to add to his score, if the weather was favourable, at the latter end of the season. That day we both took to trouting, and were not very successful, as the Scorff is but an indifferent trout river, which the natives attribute to a descent of pike from Lake Pontallach, and the havoc committed by them among the fry.

Although, the weather was so unfavourable, I determined to fish the river to its source. So, I left my quarters at Pont Scorff, and took the road (rather round about, *vide* map, but pretty good) to Plouar, a small town of a thousand inhabitants, or thereabouts. There was no public conveyance thither, so I was

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obliged to content myself with a box on wheels, and a fumigating coachman, who informed me that the route he was taking was equivalent to nine English miles. He drove me to the Hotel de Commerce, a most comfortable residence (for this country), except on a market-day, which, by the by, is on Mondays. Its landlady is, unexceptionably, devoted to the interests of her patrons.

I naturally imagined, on finding this town so apparently cut off from civilisation, that its inhabitants would have been as uncouth and rude as in other parts in the interior of Brittany. I was, on the contrary, agreeably surprised to find that they were, very civil and obliging, and could speak French as well as Breton,—a most important point for sportsmen who are making a tour. The excellent native, who served as my guide, took me to a hamlet on the Le Faouet road, called Pontalars, where a fine bridge spans the River Scorff. I was directed by him to fish up stream on the left-hand side; but I did not do so with much confidence, as the water was shallow and rapid, and the mill-dams few and far between. I knew what damage the hand-nets must have perpetrated therein in the two previous summers, which were so unusually dry. My presentiments were but too true, for I caught nothing but a few small trout. After passing the angle, that the river made, higher up, and which can be seen in the map, the volume of water became more contracted, and the pools much

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deeper. Here, in a small pool, a fine salmon came slowly up to look at my yellow-dun fly, and, happily for my light tackle, refused to take it. Higher and higher I ascended, even unto the great Lake of Pontalleck, and, by neglecting to fish all but the deep pools, realized a good basket of trout. The lake itself slept in peaceful serenity, and I did not disturb it. It looked, what it really is, a nursery for gigantic pike, amongst which fifty trimmers might do considerable damage. On returning, I found a native reclining under an old oak-tree waiting for the cool of the evening, when he was about to make his second attack on the unoffending salmon. He showed me a fly of divers colours and curious manufacture, but did not make me believe that he was going to fish with it. He was far too wise, and while making strangers believe that he intended to use that curious article, would most assuredly, on their departure, adopt the more efficacious bait of worms.

But it is too long a day's work to fish from Pontalars to Pontalleck. So in all future excursions my native took me by a bridle road to the angle in the river that I mentioned before, whence to Pontalleck it is not so severe a trial to the walking powers.

Even unto Plouar do the L'Orient *chasseurs* love to penetrate, for partridges are abundant, and other game in proportion: besides, the opposition hotel, that of the Lion d'Or, is well suited to the Gallic taste. But I prefer my quarters at the Hotel de

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Commerce, as I love not to be driven wild with their vapourings about the *chasse*, and dogs. I found the prices here as moderate as in Finisterre. The old lady only asks three shillings and sixpence per diem for her luxuries, which are decidedly superior to those found elsewhere. It is possible to take a carriage hence, to either Guemené (thirteen miles) or Melrand viâ Bubry (ten miles). The former in spring, or after heavy rain, is worthy of a visit. It is the Scorf in its infancy that there offers every chance of a basket of fair-sized fish. With respect to the latter, I refer the reader to my Pontivy gleanings.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE beautiful little village of Hennabon is accessible from either L'Orient or Pontscorff. From the former town, omnibuses start at all hours with plenty of passengers; from the latter, there is no public conveyance. A private carriage is the only means of progression over this eight miles. Hennebon is situated on the River Blavet,—here, and for some way above, a tidal river. I could not but admire its pretty situation in a well-wooded valley, and I often thought how an antiquary would gloat over the old church and walls. A stranger will be reminded by the fortifications of the gallant defence made by its inhabitants in the days gone by, though he must look with suspicion on those two cannon balls, inserted in the solid masonry by some wag, I fear, for the purpose of imposing upon the too credulous visitor. In spite of this, however, no one doubts the bravery and gallant conduct of its defenders during the siege. In modern times we look more to other traits of character in the inhabitants of a town or village, and are more particularly glad to find that the landladies at the two Hennebon Inns are distinguished for their civilities

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and attention. A French gentleman, who was there on a visit at the same time as myself, sang their praise continuously, and, moreover, had formed a high opinion of this provincial town, because there were so many "distractions" daily in the shapes of diligences passing to and fro, which, in his idea, redeemed any place from the character of dulness.

There is a small village about twenty minutes' walk from Hennebon, called Lochriste, which I consider the head quarters for the salmon-fishing. There is a weir, the third from Hennebon, where, in favourable weather, in April and May, salmon can be caught, and where I have known them taken with flies, whose fabrication would be laughed at by professors of the art. But I was very anxious, on the occasion of my first visit, to see the far-famed fall at the sixth lock from Hennebon. So one morning I followed the left bank of the canal, which slowly wound its way through a wild and desolate district seldom diversified by anything but wood. It took me at least an hour to walk there from Lochriste; but it was a sight, worthy of a longer peregrination, to see the salmon making vain efforts to surmount the fall. There seemed to be a constant succession of jumpers, who would make their attempts in the most difficult place, instead of taking advantage of the special slope of wood that the authorities had built to facilitate their advance. No doubt they used this convenience as a last resource, and found their way high

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up the Blavet by a simple contrivance, which the Chateaulin authorities would do well to imitate on their river.

At this particular place (the sixth lock) Science, they say, wields the rod in vain. No matter how skilful the fisherman may be, he will be compelled to retire unrewarded by a single rise. From some unexplained cause pig's wool and feathers are quite at a discount. Whether it is, that the fish are too intent on ascending this miniature Niagara, or that it is a subtler salmon that dwells here, I have not yet heard. Below, however, in the other falls, the case is different; the eight and twelve pounders rise well in favourable weather, as many gentlemen sportsmen, who have been in this district, can fully testify. Englishmen have, in Cæsar's words, "come, seen, and conquered," and left their doings on record as advice to their successors to go and do likewise. It is, however, a late river, *i. e.* at least two months later than its neighbour the Scorff, so no one need think of fishing it before the end of April. For my part, I was quite in love with a small house at Lochriste. I liked its garden, its situation, its propinquity to the canal and to certain cock-woods and snipe-grounds, to which a few Hennebon sportsmen can do but small damage. Then there is a small stream almost opposite the village, which teems with trout, to say nothing of certain mill-dams, favoured likewise with the presence

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of that sporting fish. Altogether, the advantages of the locality made me think it a fine place for any one, tired of the world and town-life, to drop his anchor in, and enjoy some of the real charms of vegetation in foreign parts. Besides, no one here can be considered out of the pale of civilisation, so easy is it to reach Nantes and Paris by means of the couriers and diligences that pass through the ancient town of Hennebon.

Untoward circumstances, I am sorry to say, always prevented me paying my contemplated visit to Baud, where the Inn and river are highly praised by all that have visited it. But as, I will not endorse any opinions, without seeing the places myself, I must perforce be silent about its merits. Thus I have finished with the "Southern Circuit," which, on the whole, is a very pleasant one for both angler and shooter to visit. No matter what the time of the year may be, an average amount of amusement may be had, coupled with that great desideratum, pretty good quarters to stay in after a hard day's work.

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CHAPTER XX.

I must again be transported back to Carhaix, my centre of operations, before I start and explore the wonders of the "Northern Circuit." In the days of my childhood, or, rather, when but just arrived in Brittany, I used to take my place for Morlaix in the little diligence which passed through Carhaix at one o'clock at night. Now, I always eschew that uncomfortable vehicle and engage a carriage, which can perform the twenty-five miles in five hours. I do not think any driver could possibly go faster over a road, which, if not dangerous, is at least as bad as any in Brittany.

One morning, in the cold month of February, I started on the Morlaix road, with my ancient friend the Justice of the Peace, of perch-killing celebrity. Pontargoret, about eight miles from Carhaix, was our destination, and on our road we passed the mines of Poulahouan, which most Englishmen take the trouble to descend, and, on returning to upper air, always declare they have seen better of the kind in their own country. They would do much better to look for some of the game that exists above the earth in the

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neighbourhood of that village, and which is truly abundant on all the farms. Care should, however, be taken not to invade the preserved *chasse* of Mons. Blacke, the manager of the mines.

The hamlet of Pontargoret, which we reached shortly afterwards, consisted of an auberge, a mill, and a blacksmith's forge; and, about twenty yards further on, was the stream that we were to fish. The legal luminary and I descended from our perch, and, although it was a bitter cold morning, did not despair of success. From the bridge we fished, one on each side, down stream for about half a mile. It would have been useless going further, as the Huelgoat mine river there joined ours, and poisoned the water. On returning, I found my friend already tired of fly-fishing, so he had substituted in the place of flies, a most uncompromising lob-worm, with which, he said, he was sure to catch a big trout in the poisoned part of the water!! While he was intent on that operation, I went above the bridge for about half a mile, (it is not much use going higher, as the shallow water in summer is poached by the natives,) and proceeded to try my luck down stream. Here I was shortly joined by the Justice, who intently watched the proceedings. These were somewhat interesting, as he lent me a dun-fly, made in Devonshire, for a dropper, while I appended a London made dun to the end of my line. It was, really, quite an exciting match between the rough-

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and-ready country fly, and the little metropolitan dandy, and the Justice, under the influence of the contents of his case bottle, quite entered into the spirit of the thing. How eagerly he chronicled another rise or kill for his; how he despaired when he witnessed a capture with my fly. His enthusiasm knew no bounds, when, under a willow, I hooked a splendid fellow with his dun, and, had I only landed him, what would he not have done and said. He, however, won his bottle of wine, as, at two o'clock, his fly had scored twenty-two veritable rises, and twelve killed; mine thirteen rises, and nine killed. This, it must be remembered, occurred in the month of February; in April the sport would have been much better.

After the day's amusement the Justice returned to Carhaix, and I went on to Morlaix. About three miles beyond Pontargoret is Le Squiriou, and here I stopped for a few minutes at the Inn which has lately been put into repair, and is now kept by an ex-*gensd'arme* of Carhaix. It is, even when the winds blow, a very decent quarter for people who do not care for luxuries. In winter the woods that surround the house and stretch away for miles in the direction of Huelgoat, are well stocked with woodcocks, and really, there is scarcely a person to shoot them. There are a few roe-deer, and apocryphal stories of wild boars; I know that none of the latter have been seen this seven years. On leaving Le

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Squiriou, I passed Berrien on the left, where a fair day's partridge-shooting may be had. On the right, on a high hill in the distance, I saw that ultima Thule—Sevignac, near which snipes do love to congregate. Shortly after this I quitted the Menez Arres range, which, since leaving Pontargoret, I had been traversing, and entered the territory, so often shot over by Morlaix gunners. I was delighted, when, at the end of my day's journey, I drove up to the Hotel de Provins, presided over by that eminent sportsman Mons. Toucas.

This individual and his wife are fully alive to the advancing spirit of the age, and each, in their separate departments, do the best they can for their guests. They have imported a *chef* from Paris, who is great in the composition of dinners, public as well as private, and of whom I shall have to say more anon. Here, in the place of coiffed maids of all work, I found male waiters. There is also a smoking room, and good bed-chambers in the place of the dens that we had been accustomed to in the interior. Moreover the moderate sum of four and sixpence per diem was considered sufficient remuneration for all these advantages.

Morlaix is built on two sides of a valley, through which meanders a small stream that helps to form the harbour for the few vessels that find their way up the intricate channel. There is a large Government manufactory of tobacco, which gives

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employment to hundreds of poor people, but does not fabricate that narcotic herb to the satisfaction of the public. It is a curious old nest of houses with antique gabled ends, through which the narrowest of alleys conduct the astonished visitor. There are numerous new buildings on the quay, and elsewhere, which are fast making encroachments on their elder brethren, and ere long, probably, will supersede them entirely. Altogether it is a pleasant place, too hot perhaps in summer, but cool enough in spring and autumn. The population is large, and some seventy individuals take out a *permis de chasse*. Many unlicensed persons also wield the gun, so it is no wonder that, after the first week or two of the shooting season, but little sport is to be had in the immediate neighbourhood.

In former times, before the love of sport became developed in the Breton breast, the arrondissement of Morlaix was famous for its shooting and fishing. Now, the visitor can only depend on finding plenty of cocks and snipes, which no amount of persecution seem to diminish; and, when the crack shots want a good day's sport, they drive to Le Ponthou, Lannioneau, Guerlesquen, and other places in the mountains—all, by the by, well known to mine host of the *Hotel des Provins*. With respect to the fishing, the two streams, that join in the town, were once full of trout. They were, in fact, the best river trout in Brittany—fine noble fellows—that it does one's heart good to

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see. Now, the native fishermen are very lucky if they catch half-a-dozen annually; for not only have the greater part been poisoned by the emanations from the manufactories, but the few that remain rival their Thames brethren in wariness. Few Englishmen, I suspect, would care to spin a minnow from the town-bridges, or some back window, even were the chances of success greater than they are. There is too, the beautiful river of Penzé, about three miles distant, which has (in this part) been completely ruined by the natives; so much so, that if half-a-dozen salmon are taken therein annually, the fishermen are quite content. There are also a few lakes, which require a boat to fish properly, and which have been known to give a capital day's sport.

So, the day after my arrival, I was obliged to go some distance for my fishing, and requested Mons. Toucas to accompany me to his favourite river, which lies to the north-west of the town. This worthy unfortunately was engaged, but he agreed to lend me his *chef* to show me the road, as the calls on his kitchen were not very numerous. Now, the hero of the kitchen was both *pêcheur* and *chasseur*, and so was in the habit of borrowing a gig and horse of trotting celebrity, when he wished to make his Sunday excursions. It was arranged, that evening, that he should obtain the same for me on the morrow; and having promised to be up betimes in

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the morning, he retired to some "smoky" café, and I to my downy couch. The sun rose early enough. Not so the *chef*. I was obliged to visit him in his dormitory, ere he recollected the necessity of being on the *qui vive*. When fairly awake, I must say he managed to prepare some breakfast in double quick time, and having packed up the luncheon, he produced his rod and worms, and declared himself ready for a start. The gig was at the door; so the *chef* at once grasped the ribbons, squared his elbows in approved fashion, and proceeded to rattle over the Morlaix stones, bending backwards and forwards, after the manner of the steerer of an eight-oar racing boat. He steered his nag pretty well through the narrow intricate streets, while he intimated to me that, by selecting this route, he was making a short cut. This turned out to be quite a delusion. For, first, a cart laden with hay, then another with manure, and then a country team, stopped the way, all of which had to be avoided by a detour through other narrow streets. The angry words that our *chef* rolled forth in full volume were only met by a stolid stare from the drivers, and failed, in each instance, to clear the road. At length we were trotting along the St. Pol high road, and my companion's tongue was unloosed, and told tales, the truth of which my politeness forbade me to question.

First, he pointed out the identical spot where three *chasseurs* had three shots at wolves, at the dis-

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tance of twenty paces, without producing any effect; a feat that now called forth expressions of unmitigated disgust from my companion, who, had he been there, would have lodged he did not know how many slugs in the animals' hides. From another turn of the road he pointed out the scene of a fox-hunt, and even that wily animal's earth, where, two of the *élite* of Morlaix hornblowers were stationed to prevent him approaching his domestic hearth. The *chef* was disgusted when he remembered how the animal, regardless of the music, made his entrance good by some unknown back-door. Then the partridges *en masse*, and the woodcocks that he has killed; could he live, he said, in Paris again, and miss making similar bags in coming seasons? Poor fellow, I dare say he enjoyed it all very much, but still though he burns much powder I know he seldom touches a feather; and, tell it not in Gath! I *have* known him return with nothing but a poor old brown owl in his bag. While the *chef* was thus enlivening me with his conversation, his spaniel was amusing himself famously,—at one moment he would spring a brace of birds, and a few seconds after frighten an unfortunate rabbit out of his senses, quite disregarding the shrill theatrical whistle that his master treated him to occasionally. It was, I suppose, about eight miles (there are no stones to mark the distance) to Pleunavon, a little hamlet perched, as is usual in Brittany, on an eminence, and where we enquired

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for a native to take our gig back to St. Catharine's. This was soon found in the person of a shoeless vagabond, who left his occupation of breaking stones, and, heedless of flints and other inequalities of the road, trotted along after the gig. We arrived at a bridge, which was our destination, about twenty minutes after leaving Pleunavon, when the horse and gig were confided to our vagabond's care, and we proceeded to put up our rods.

How vexed and annoyed the worthy *chef* was, on finding that he had prudently brought a top with him that did not fit his rod,—a fact that looked like bringing his day's fishing to a premature conclusion. But, as it was an aged implement, he allowed me to cut it and form a splice, which, when arranged satisfactorily, put him again into good humour. I will say this worthy behaved very well in keeping at a respectful distance, and never attempting, as most Frenchmen would, to fish before me,—a proceeding that, on such a bright morning as this, would have been fatal to all sport. The stream wound slowly through a country covered with gorse and heather, but without any of that striking and beautiful scenery incidental to most Brittany rivers. There were no trees on the banks, and the weeds, which by the end of May must quite cover the surface of the water, alone proved troublesome. After a few changes, I at last hit upon the right fly, that true friend in the time of need, the black hackle. It

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was tolerably effective, and would have been much more so, had not the millers that day apparently struck work, and thus left many of the best runs without a current of water. In fancying that better luck would await me lower down, I committed a grave error, as the further I went in the direction of St. Pol, the less fish there seemed to be. Had I but made application to the millers, or waited their convenience, I am sure I should have done better in the upper parts of the stream.

The proceedings, too, of the vagabond rather spoilt the afternoon's amusement. He certainly had deposited our gig at St. Catharine's, and on coming to apprise us of the fact, he likewise hinted at the immense distance that separated us from our hostelry. I suppose he was anxious to return to his stones, or, afraid that his absence would be discovered by his employers. At all events his representations made a great impression on the *chef*, who did not at all relish a drive to Morlaix by starlight. So I, reluctantly, put up my rod, and, after a copious draught of milk obtained at a farm house, followed the steps of our guide. A quarter of an hour's walk showed the fallacy of all the miscreant's statements, as we then came in sight of St. Catharine, which was hardly a mile from where we had left off fishing. So we sent him to look after the horse, while we passed our spare time in the inspection of certain cart stallions, who would certainly bear com-

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parison with some of our best dray horses. Their sons and daughters I have often met on the road to the central and other parts of France, where they command good prices, viz., from 40*l.* to 80*l.* a piece, which must prove good remuneration to the dealers and their go-betweens. These and other establishments are in private hands, and have nothing to do with the government *Haras*, where thorough-bred stallions are kept. We returned by a different route that evening, and passed by the hamlet of Penzé, built at the mouth of the depopulated river of that name, and at last came into the Brest road, after making many turns and windings. The poor *chef's* enthusiasm gradually died out ere we reached Morlaix. Tobacco and exercise had fairly tried his powers of endurance. It was only the last dying ember that was resuscitated within him, and that made him "boil up a gallop" for the edification of the street-loungers of his native town.

This river at St. Catharine, and that at St. Thegonec, which I have described before, are the only two in the neighbourhood of Morlaix that I consider worthy of a visit. The rivers close to the town are so completely spoilt, that I could advise no one to spend his time in attempting to catch the few fish that are to be found therein.

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CHAPTER XXI.

St. Pol de Leon is to the north of Morlaix, and is not far from the hamlet of St. Catharine, near which the *chef* and I had fished together. Visitors generally go thither for the purpose of seeing its cathedral. As they might take gun or rod with them, it may be as well to say, that there are a few trout to be caught in the two rivers that pass close to the town. The shooting, owing to the great extent of *landes*, is very indifferent. Partridges are quite rarities; hares and rabbits offer the only real chance for sport. In the winter, certainly, an average number of duck and teal may be found on the estuaries; but, except in hard weather, little will be done without a gunning punt.

At Morlaix I found there were two sporting routes that I might take, and whichever I selected promised to be productive of sport. The first led to the north, to Lannion and Treguier, the second, to Le Ponthou and Belle Ile. To the former there is a diligence every day, whose motto seems to be, that "The race is not to the swift," and consequently lingers some three hours on the road. I took a

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place in the dawdling old vehicle, and, on arriving at Pont Menou, I crossed a very likely-looking river, which I found out to be an old friend, viz., the continuation of the Le Ponthou stream. In former days, people used to reside at Plestein, so as to be near this haunt of trout and salmon; but no one now-a-days is so foolish, as it is netted more scientifically than any other I know. It was the same that was recommended to me by a Frenchman, ere I set out on my travels, as a capital halting place for a week or so!! The diligence presently passed the fishing village of St. Michael and the bluff headlands that face the north, near which both the partridge and cock-shooting is above the average. On the right hand side of the road, but some way inland, equally good sport may be had.

I arrived just in time to be too late for the *table d'hôte* dinner (set for five o'clock) at the hostelry of one Mademoiselle Tulle, where a good bedroom was allotted to me, and cleanliness was everywhere apparent. The hostess was quite on the *qui vive*, as she looked upon me evidently as one of the genus "English pigeon," of the length of whose purses she, as well as her compatriots, form such exaggerated notions. So, *prenez garde*, fellow travellers, and strike a bargain if possible before you enter, else your little bill at parting will cause you some momentary regret. Four shillings per diem is ample remuneration for all she gives us, which

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is not so *recherché* or so plentiful that we should pay extravagantly for it. There is another hotel, that of France, in the centre of the town, which is good, but expensive. Besides, the landlady gives herself airs, which makes it an unpleasant residence to any one who likes a little civility and attention.

My windows commanded a good view of the quay, which, thanks to a financial crisis, and other local causes, was now patronised by very few owners of vessels. I had a bird's-eye view of the prying custom-house official on his lonesome march, whose only recreation was confined to watching the operations of the salmon-netters, just then busily engaged in their lucrative trade. For the rain was falling, and the salmon in the bay below had taken the hint, and were hastening up without delay. I saw the look-out men, who had taken up their situation on the banks now that the tide was falling, and whose eye-sight was so keen, that a fish, undiscoverable by an amateur, was easily detected by them. A wheel-barrow, with the netting apparatus, was by their side, and, at a given signal, the net was run out, and nine times out of ten the unfortunate victim was entrapped. During the night-time and floods, the salmon could baffle their pursuers; but the results of the falling rain in the shape of a spate were not as yet made manifest.

What I said before, in my opening chapters, respecting salmon-fishing in Brittany, is quite appli-

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cable to this Lannion river. In the days gone by, none produced more salmon and, even now, an immense number are sent from it to Paris; but unless the regulations are more strictly enforced, it will soon be tenantless. Even the netters take less every year, and anglers cannot account for a fourth part of what they once could. The principal reasons of the great diminution are these. First, the cruives, very lately put up by the millers, are the causes of incalculable mischief, but these, they say, will next year be abolished by special edict. Next, a decision of the law courts gave a mile of fresh water to the netters, which was very unfair to the poor fish, who ought only to be thus taken in "the tidal way." The manner by which they arrived at this verdict was rather ludicrous. The judge appointed a committee to *taste* the water, and see if any saline particles existed therein. So these sapient men retired to the river, drank of its limpid water, and declared that there was a strong admixture of salt. Yet, be it known, that never does the sea top that weir, save on the occasion of an extraordinary spring tide. So, now a fish has to run the gauntlet of the nets in the fresh as well as the salt water. Lastly, the close season is so limited, and so badly fixed, that hundreds of fish after spawning annually fall victims to every vagabond wielder of a rod. The banks are rented, partly by English residents, and partly by professional and other anglers of the town of Lannion;

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so it often happens that one party can fish from one side, and the opposition from the other, when the salmon get a good benefit—nay, seem never to enjoy peace and quiet. This hiring system is carried on along the whole length of the river up to Belle Ile; but I am nearly sure that no gentleman amateur would find any difficulty in obtaining the requisite permission, should he wish to try his luck. The professional anglers are by no means to be looked upon as "muffs." Some people even say that they equal, if not surpass, the Englishmen, who are good fishermen, and who first instructed their French brethren in the mystic art of fly-fishing. It is not difficult to throw a line in most of the pools, but it is no easy task to *land* a fresh run salmon, as there are a great many trees, which can only be avoided by very judicious treatment of rod and fish. I have seen gentlemen handle a hooked salmon here in a manner that would astonish a Scotch or Irish fisherman, who has none of those impediments to deal with. I have seen them lift their rods over or around the most entangled places, and gaff their fish with a promptitude quite astonishing. At the same time, it is fair to state that their tackle is very strong. I remember well the astonishment of a gentleman who came to these parts to see a salmon killed. He was fresh from civilisation and dinner parties, where much is said over the mahogany, and many theories most warmly discussed. Over-night he gave us the *resumé*

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of some advice volunteered by an old Scotch fisherman, respecting the handling and landing a salmon. It concluded with some such words as these: "After you have played your salmon some *twenty minutes* you may begin to bring him to land for the purpose of gaffing," &c. On hearing this, our worthy entertainer burst out laughing, and hoped to be able to show how differently such things were done in Brittany. The morrow was anything but a favourable day, but a fish rose, and was hooked, at three o'clock in the afternoon. The stranger and myself were close at hand to see the proceedings; and the gaff-carrier came up instanter on hearing the well-known cry. "There was a jump, a splash," so the stranger said; afterwards "a Now I've got him" from the gaffer, and I saw a ten pound fish on the bank a few yards from me, and not more than three minutes had been consumed in the operation. The stranger pondered much, and could not but admit the wisdom of acting in this manner, which gave the fish no chance of escape by means of roots or trees, and was solely dependent for success on the strength of the tackle and the skill of the fisherman.

As a trouting rendezvous, the Lannion river ranks high, not for the good taste of the fish when captured, but for their gameness and fair size. The salmon-fishers are only too glad to see the trout caught, as they are well aware of the depredations they commit on the salmon spawn. After ascend-

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ing the river for two miles out of the town, it is quite immaterial where one fishes, as every part is equally good, from here to Belle Ile. There is one drawback, viz., that the constant "flagellation," and practice of "worming" for salmon, scares the trout to a great extent. This system I have never seen practised elsewhere, and therefore deserves passing notice. When the water is bright, or the fish rise short, you will see some half dozen anglers trampling on a wet meadow, as though they were working on a treadmill. This operation very soon brings up to the surface sufficient worms for their purpose. Some seven or eight of these are put upon a large hook, which thus forms about as large and unpalatable-looking morsel, as can be conceived. They say there is a great deal of art required to throw and work this properly, and I can well believe it. The bait is allowed to rest on the ground behind the caster previous to its being thrown into water by the fisherman, and it is very hard, they say, to put it into the proper place in the water each time. The stream carries this slowly over the stones and mud, and, if a salmon is tempted therewith, he is allowed to gorge it, when his capture should approach a certainty. It can be easily imagined how the constant splash of such a line and bait must scare the trout.

Three days after my arrival the river was declared to be in good order, and I started betimes with a Lannion gentleman, the son of one of the lessees.

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After a walk of three miles, we arrived at the pool that was supposed to offer the best chance. But we were by no means the first arrivals, for already, the professionals and other renters of the water were on the opposite banks, or on their way to favourite spots higher up. Very little rain had previously fallen this season, and this was the first spate of any consequence, so, the exodus from Lannion was remarkable, and might be compared to the departure of bees from a hive after a shower, or to a cloud of white butterflies just emerging from their chrysalis state, on a bright summer morning. Here we saw some purveyor of cutlery, exchanging a quiet joke with the confectioner, who, poor soul, was vainly endeavouring to extricate his fly from a stiff oak bough. Further on, we met some vendor of mackerel or other fish of the sea to the inhabitants of Lannion, bearing on his shoulder his linen bag and gaff, and casting his line with a precision that I should like to attain. Next passed with quiet and stealthy step the real professional angler, who, was shaking off the crowd as he would dust from his feet, and, with his rod in its case, was making his way to some well known haunt. At another place we found a fisherman munching his homely crust and slice of bacon, who scowling at us as we passed, did not deign to exchange a syllable, or even the accustomed "*Bon jour*" of the inhabitants of La Belle France. In us he recognised

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the *mauvais Anglais*, who rented the best parts of his river, which, if he could have fished this morning, he would not have been so unsuccessful as he had been up to the present moment. Anon, we stumbled on a miller's boy, who had made hay while the sun shone, and had secured in his own pool a salmon of ten pounds weight, by means of that irresistible worm bait. It was, in fact, a perfect Derby day on the river, the like of which I have never seen before or since. To-morrow, and for a month, perhaps for a year to come, like their prototypes the annual attendants at the Epsom festival, they will be engaged in more congenial duties, and no more thrash the unresisting stream. So we musingly passed the fine old ruin of Tonguedec, sacred to pic-nics, and the wine of Epernay; so we passed the old chateau of Kurgrist, for years past tenanted by Englishmen, till we seem to have arrived at a quiet spot. Not so. The cry was, "Still they come," as party after party strolled along the banks, and gave us the benefit of a long stare, or a sapient remark.

It was not that we were shy of being seen, or of our movements with the tapering rod being criticised; it was simply that we did not care to show the herd when we rose and missed a fish. For we well knew that their eagle eyes would mark the spot to a nicety, and after we had retired, or before we returned next morning, would assuredly throw over,

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if not catch, that identical salmon. My companion, however, risked all this, and in a very short time I heard the welcome shout that proclaimed a fish in trouble. Indeed, "it was a noble sight" to see him at the edge of that boiling pool, cool as the coolest of garden cucumbers, quietly puffing away at a short clay pipe, and "giving and taking" with as much easy nonchalance as though he was handling a half-pound dace instead of a fish that weighed ten-pounds. Even the successful feat of gaffing, and the exposure of the silvery monster, just fresh from the briny depths, failed to excite him. He just put his fly to rights, went to a pool lower down, and recommenced the endless "swish—swish" with his long casting line. Perseverance was again rewarded, for he killed another that evening; and many curious and longing eyes regarded our linen bag as we returned triumphantly to Lannion. Ah! all this was great fun in the pleasant days gone by, and perhaps we may see as much if not more sport on this river, if the regulations respecting the fishing are strictly enforced, and one or two slight alterations made in the existing code of laws.

With respect to salmon-flies, I had better recommend a stranger to purchase a few from one of the native anglers. They themselves are very fond of using the blue cock's feathers for wings, which are very efficacious in the clear water. For, unlike the canals at Hennebon and Chateaulin, this river is

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clear and bright, and more sombre colours will be requisite. March and April are the best months for salmon-fishing; but, of course, much depends on the quantity of rain that has fallen in the winter and spring. The shooting near Lannion is quite up to the average, but the number of *chasseurs* is legion. Still, the birds manage to save themselves in the gorses, and keep up a good breeding stock from season to season. There are woodcocks and snipes, and altogether enough game to amuse a man of moderate desires.

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CHAPTER XXII.

I MENTIONED just now how insipid and tasteless the Lannion trout were, and how little prized in the kitchen. Curiously enough, there is another stream in its immediate vicinity, which produces trout of the most exquisite flavour, and as pink as a salmon. Thither I went with my worthy friend, without whose aid I never could have found my way. It was at least five English miles, in the direction of the ancient town of Treguier, and on leaving the high road, the path to the river was difficult to find, He had warned me beforehand that it was but little use coming hither, as the quality of the fish had induced the poachers to pay their respects to it so often that, instead of catching thirty or forty in a day, it was now considered good sport to take half-a-dozen. As the water was deep and sluggish, and but little wind, unfortunately, ruffled its surface, I was not surprised at our having a very poor day's sport. We fished down stream to within a mile or so of Treguier; we changed flies; we spun minnows; but all to no purpose, for at the end of the day our sum total was very small. Our walk home along

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the Treguier road was enlivened by the importunate demands of a beggar, who followed us to a wayside inn, whither we betook ourselves in search of the "creature comforts." This individual, when he found us deaf to his beggar oratory, proceeded to open his wallet, and take from thence a large crust of bread, and scraps of meat not a few. Then he drew forth a leathern purse, and handled, as only a miser could, those copper coins, the results of his day's labour. He counted them at least a dozen times ere he exchanged them for silver with the landlady, and no less than forty-eight pence were reckoned up. As an able-bodied man seldom earns more than twenty-pence a day, begging would seem to be a most profitable occupation.

An antiquarian might feel at home at Treguier, but a sportsman is quite out of his element. The fishing in one of the rivers (which I have described) is a dead letter, and in the other very poor. I do not believe the stories about salmon that the natives are so fond of telling me. As to shooting, there is absolutely none worth talking about. At Lesardrieux there are occasionally a great many ducks and teal, but all other kinds of shooting are at a discount, not only here, but near the other villages, that dot the coast as far as St. Brieux. Once on a time, and not so very long ago, there was plenty of game; but I only speak of what is and is not at the present day.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

I mounted one morning that lofty receptacle in the diligence commonly called the *banquette*, which would seem to be expressly made for the English, so patronised is it by them. My intention was to start from Morlaix, and make the other tour that I mentioned before—viz., to Le Ponthou, Belle Ile en Terre, Guingamp, and St. Brieux. The tall conductor of the diligence was in high feather, having made, as he said, a good "*commerce*" with the peasants for game, which, at certain times, was brought to him for safe passage to Rennes and Paris. We passed one or two gigs containing Morlaix sportsmen, with their guns fixed up behind, and their dogs in close attendance. They were bound for Le Ponthou, so much frequented by every one possessing a quadruped and conveyance in the good old town of Morlaix. For no place is more fancied by professional and dandy shooters than Le Ponthou; and its two tolerable Inns, at the beginning of the season especially, are the rendezvous of many a jovial party. I am not quite sure that the peasants look very kindly on the intruders, which no one would wonder

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at, who had happened to hear some conversation between a denizen of the town and country, and which is by no means creditable to the good taste of the former. But although, in consequence, there were a few hostile farmers (and only a few), the country was so extensive, and so very fairly stocked with game, that I never had any difficulty in steering clear of all such *desagremens*. I wished that the little stream had not been quite spoilt by the netters, but it is little use wishing for those old times to be revived when it was full of trout, and when between here and Pont Menou a capital day's sport might always be had. Now, you might as well fish a puddle by the roadside as all that length of stream, for nothing but small fry exist within.

It is a pleasant journey of twelve miles from Le Ponthou to Belle Ile en Terre. On the right hand of the road I saw the fine lake of Bon Voyage, once full of trout, but now, alas! almost tenantless; on the left, leading out of the lake, is a stream, which a little lower down, supplies a mill reservoir, that enjoys a good name for the large trout that it contains. But, unfortunately, there is no boat, and it is very difficult to fish it to advantage from the bank.

The name Belle Ile en Terre is suggestive of pretty scenery, and for once, unlike our Mount Pleasants and Paradise Rows from which good taste recoils with horror, the name is no misnomer. It

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is not, like most Breton towns, perched upon a hill, but built in a valley upon a river, whose fame has spread far and wide. Here wandering Englishmen have often loved to congregate, and people come to fish. I have known some, who having paid a visit to this small section of Lower Brittany, considered themselves competent to pass judgment on all that that name embraces. Alas! if this is to be the river and country by which they must form their opinions, they will verily mislead their unfortunate listeners.

The diligence set me down close to the Inn, conducted in the usual rough and ready Breton style, and presided over by one Daniel, whose name has given rise to many jokes, of which that "holy man" was luckily ignorant. From my windows I could see the river, and from the garden in front people could fish it, though not always with any great success. Its waters furnished me with my matutinal bath; my clothes were washed, or rather beat, on its bank: if it had only been a little better stocked with trout, it would have been a true friend in time of need. Once upon a time it was full of salmon, and even now, in spite of the traps, there are a few; but, alas! too few for me to hold out any hopes to the chance angler that fishes for them. An English gentleman, who resides here, is ever on the watch for any fish that may have escaped the snares of the Lannionites. He has hired most of the likely pools, but even *his* sum

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total of killed and wounded at the end of the year is very small. Then the trout-fishing in the four streams above the town that all fall into their big brother, has been woefully injured by night-lines and hand-nets; and those fine old trout of aldermanic proportions have gradually disappeared, leaving only small fry to reign in their stead. Below the town, a large paper manufactory has sprung up, where oceans of chloride of lime is used, which must do much harm to the fish in its immediate vicinity. Sport, however, is to be had in the falls lower down, which we must gratefully accept, and be thankful. It is a great pity that more cannot be said in favour of this Belle Ile river. For it does look so well when winding through beautiful scenery, and tumbling over *debris* as old as the hills themselves that, could good sport be guaranteed therein, no one would want to go farther a-field in search of either the picturesque or sport.

The shooting, too, has deteriorated of late years; and many reasons are given why those wonderful bags of woodcocks and partridges cannot now be made. Some say that it is the hard shooting. Others, that poaching is much more in vogue amongst the small farmers. Others, that the bad breeding seasons that occured a short time ago have to bear the blame. All I can say is, that though youth and energy may do something in that hilly country, I should myself prefer to shoot every day at some

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little distance from the village. There is one other drawback, which I must not pass over. I mentioned before that Belle Ile had for the last twenty years been a centre of attraction to roving Englishmen, who, I am sorry to say, have, as usual, "left their mark behind them." Why was it necessary for them to talk of their prowess in the field, and make the game so scarce that it is now almost unattainable by the *native chasseur?* Why was it necessary to taunt the Bretons with their inability of moving a fish in the river, and then, thanks to their own tackle and flies, catch plenty in the presence of the enemy? Why was it ever necessary to give the peasants a taste of their pugilistic qualities, a thing that might be pardoned at home, but is sadly out of place here? For the native mind, though hard to make an impression upon, is wax to retain any slight or insult gratuitously offered by a foreigner. All this has made it rather an unpleasant quarter in the shooting season; and in none is so much ill-feeling shown to English strangers. However, I have had many pleasant days' shooting and fishing there, which others may also have if they will only behave as gentlemen sporting in a foreign country should do. Good Madame Daniel dismissed me with her blessing; and for all her accommodation only demanded three shillings per diem as remuneration. That good old soul was quite the type of what a landlady should be.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

It was very early one fine October morning that a rickety old Belle Ile carriage drove up to Hotel Daniels. I had engaged it to take me over ten miles of cross-country road to Callac. I passed, on my way, the forest of a certain count who is jealous of his seignorial rights and will not permit strangers to beat it for woodcocks, or other game. Further on, I saw a capital district for shooting, that quite rivalled the preserves near Carhaix, with regard to the quality of the sport and the quantity of large enclosures. When I descended at the Inn of one Thomas, at Callac, I was surprised to find an excellent breakfast prepared for various travellers and sportsmen; for the exterior of the said hostelry gave but little promise of anything good inside. Bags, emblematic of the *chasse*, and one or two guns adorned the otherwise naked walls; and the conversation, which savoured of nought but partridges and hares, gave me a good idea of the general tastes of the *salle-à-manger* occupants. This was a pleasant quarter, and cheap too at three shillings a day. I knew most of the people in the country, and con-

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sequently had no difficulties thrown in my way by farmers and others. Strangers who have dropped in have found it the contrary, because they have managed to excite the jealousy of the natives by exhibitions of much slaughtered game, and by their general behaviour. A mild and inoffensive individual would get on well with the "men of Callac," jealous and sensitive though they are respecting field-sports. It was no use fishing in the little stream that flowed at the bottom of the hill, as in summer-time it is quite low, and its trout remorselessly removed by the vagabonds of the district. The celebrated Biffou Lake, which is between this and Guerlesquen, was often the subject of conversation at the different meals. Although I have fished it more than once, and had great sport, I shall not enlarge upon it, as the lake is always let to individuals for the purpose of angling, and it is very difficult to obtain permission even when no one has hired the exclusive right.

From here to Guingamp (eighteen miles) there is an excellent road, which passes through a good sporting country. A wretched mail-cart, that comes to grief periodically, traverses it every night; but it would be much better to hire one of the private carriages that can be obtained at Callac. I travelled by the mail-cart and reached my destination just as the hotel was shutting up. Civilisation and something like comfort awaited me here, at the house of that extraordinary man, Mons. Sevran, who loveth

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a bagman, a glass of beer, and a pipe, and nought else beside. It is an edifying thing to listen to his sporting stories when, surrounded by his guests he pours forth his soul in sweet conversation. It is a noble sight to see him in his little den, presiding over the games of chance, so patronised by every Frenchman; to say nothing of the love of fun that prompts him to send out a black-gaitered, black-coated *commis-voyageur*, on a hot summer's day, to thrash the waters of the Guingamp river. Well does he know beforehand what will be the result of such an excursion, and that but seldom is a good trout taken in that frequently-netted water. His guidance, however, was very useful in the autumn, for much land in the neighbourhood of Guingamp was preserved, and it required a man of his standing and intelligence to calm the keepers, and keep me clear of the most impracticable members of that profession. But Guingamp never will be a place for any one to stay for sporting purposes, and neither Mons. Sevran's fun, or his moderate charge of five shillings a day, ever induced me to remain long with him.

Having so far sung the praises of our Guingamp host, it is hard to be obliged to record his last act, which savoured somewhat of sharp practice. I was particularly anxious to go on to St. Brieux by the courier, which stopped at his house at an early hour in the morning, and I was first on the list of candidates for a vacant place. But there was a young

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gentleman, adorned with velvet collars and cuffs, who wanted to go to Rennes, which is much further than St. Brieux. According to the law appertaining to public vehicles, he had the first right to any vacant place, as he wished to travel further than me. So Mons. Sevran, when the courier arrived, was very sorry, but, there was only room for one, and, unless I paid the whole fare to Rennes, I could not start. I acceded to his conditions, and was not a little surprised to find that the velvet collared youth was likewise a passenger, in spite of what the landlord had said. How Mons. S. must have chuckled over his own cleverness, in making that little *coup*, and receiving my ten francs for a journey which I was not going to make!! The courier's team bustled along so merrily, as to make Chateaulaudren appear quite close to Guingamp, whereas ten miles separate the two. This said village is not a bad place for shooting; but just now, there lives hard by a large proprietor, who abominates the English, and sets his friend sagainst them, because, during the last war, he was locked up in prison instead of being allowed his liberty on giving his parole. It was not extraordinary that the latter privilege should have been denied him, considering that he had been captain of a *privateer*, instead of a man of war. They say that an Englishman once added fuel to the flame, that burned within that aged breast, by the gratuitous information, that,

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instead of abusing English customs, he ought to be exceedingly glad that, in his case, their rigour was not carried out, otherwise that he would have been certainly hanged, instead of imprisoned. As the ex-privateer will not see it in the proper light, it is just now pleasanter to enter a bear-garden, than invade the sanctity of his domain. The little river Leff, that flows through the village, contains nothing worth fishing for, so no one should linger here in the merry months of spring.

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CHAPTER XXV.

ST. BRIEUX, just ten miles beyond Chateaulaudren, is the capital of the Cotes du Nord department, and is blessed with a large and increasing population. It boasts of several hotels, and that of Fabre is by no means the worst of them. Of course, I was not of a sufficiently sanguine temperament to expect to find any shooting here, where the tag-rag and bob-tail swarm over the country, in hot pursuit of fur and feather. The chief prey of the latter, is the migratory quail, the pursuit of which, I think, is better adapted to the measured paces of elderly gentlemen and antique dogs, than the *fire* of adventurous youth. For the latter, there is a private pack of hounds, that are supposed to kill wolves, roe-deer, and *id genus omne*, and whose immediate followers are young aristocrats (?), more intent on horn-blowing than hunting; and on exhibiting themselves to wondering natives, than compassing the death of a wild animal. The way they "mob to death" a wolf or a deer is curious, which I had an opportunity of witnessing one day, when the rival packs of Finisterre and Cotes du Nord met in the territories of the latter. All the members of the hunt seemed to

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have an equal chance of distinguishing themselves, for each had a position assigned, to which good luck alone led the unfortunate victims. On that occasion, the men of St. Brieux had the fun to themselves, for they shot two wolves, and (of course) wounded the only other one that was seen. It would have been an eternal disgrace to them, if they had not done what they did, for so thickly were the *chasseurs* placed round the wood, that the wolves ran the gauntlet of I daren't say how many charges of slugs.

The members of the hunt, however, the authorities, and the inhabitants generally, behaved quite nobly, when the Emperor and Empress honoured their city with a visit during their Brittany tour; in fact, I have seldom seen money laid out to greater advantage, as far as show and ornament were concerned. It was too bad that the elements should have been so unkind, and dimmed what would otherwise have been a festival of the first class. The townspeople had arranged arches of different kinds and shapes along the route that the *cortège* was to take, and had hung up banners of blue and gold, and crimson and white, which were pretty enough, when first placed there, but when soaked by the rain, looked very sad as they tenaciously clung to the poles. There were lamps, of all sizes and colours, suspended, wherever a place could be found for them, and festooned from the cornices of the houses in the most

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tasteful manner. Statues had been run up at the corners of the streets, and decorated with garlands. In fact, the somewhat dingy old town, in its gala costume, could hardly have been recognised by that respected party—the oldest inhabitant.

Stories had been circulated for days past respecting the expected influx of people, and the total impracticability of finding beds. It was even hinted that, after eight o'clock in the morning, carriages would be unable to traverse the streets, except in line, or at a snail's pace. Quiet and peaceful visitors, it was reported, had taken the hint and retreated on the neighbouring towns, unwilling to expend their little substance upon lodging-house sharks. We were actually recommended by one very tremulous alarmist, to bring provisions with us, as a dearth or famine must necessarily arise, he thought, from the concurrence of so many thousands. And the real state of the case was, that at eight o'clock on the identical morning, when we drove into the town, we only met one carriage between the barriers and the principal hotel, that we found the prices of beds very moderate, and an abundant and excellent supply of provisions. So much for hearsay in this veritable land of myths. The plot, as well as the rain, thickened as the day advanced; but as a wet jacket is the normal condition of a Breton peasant, the humidity made no diminution in the numbers that promenaded the streets. I

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do not think that the bad weather need have been much of a subject for regret to those who came to see the old-fashioned but dirty Breton costumes. For I am certain that that state of the atmosphere makes those garments look better, just as, in our metropolis, a dull November day is best suited to a shocking bad hat. How my old country friends, one after the other, were continually turning up, until I, indeed, had difficulty in remembering when and where I had met them! Here was the aged Mayor of Plou—something, clad in his Sunday hose, shod with his country sabots, and begirt with a red-blue-and-white sash, the colours of which do not match well with his dirty brown garments. Here was the *receveur* of Callac, whom I remember all-triumphant at a country *auberge*, after having perpetrated the massacre of twelve innocent partridges in a dusting hole. To-day he was all-resplendent, in a badly-fitting frock coat, and washed-out tie: and he took off his gossamer with the air of a person who thought something of himself; and perhaps it would be a pity to undeceive him. Next came a proprietor, the happy owner of ten thousand francs per annum, and two very pretty daughters. I think the latter's Chouan caps and rosy cheeks might excite surprise, if not envy, in even the Empress's breast, should she chance to see them. Their venerable papa looked quite a different man to-day, in his sable suit, to his original self as I last saw him, in his sackcloth

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garments and peasant's hat, munching brown bread diluted in the thinnest of soups at his farm in the far west.

Martial music proclaimed the advent of battalions of firemen, who had been sent up to St. Brieux from the chief towns of the department. Their helmets were of the most curious form and make, closely resembling those worn by the Roman soldiers, as represented in the pictures of the taking of Jerusalem. Had the firemen but been adorned with the short nether garments of Titus's warriors, the likeness would have been complete. Many a weary mile in the last thirty hours have the poor fellows marched, and yet their officers would persist in parading them up and down the muddy streets, up to the very moment of the Emperor's arrival.

A slight sensation was caused by the arrival of some carriages, containing Imperial trunks and packing cases, and guarded by *nonchalant* domestics, in the well-known liveries, one of whom, more majestic-looking than his brethren, was received by a wag with the cry of "Vive L'Empereur," and which the said domestic received with much equanimity. Next, the excellent band of the 62nd infantry paraded the streets, the forerunner of select parties from every commune in the Cotes du Nord, who were led on by their mayor bearing a banner and gilt eagle before them. On they streamed in endless succession, exchanging old Breton jokes, and pleasant *badinage*

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with their compatriots, in their unmistakable country lingo. It was ordained that they should meet the Emperor outside the town, but, unfortunately, not half of them ever arrived at their destination; for a colonel on horseback, frantically waving his sword, met them half-way, and compelled them to to defile, in double-quick time, down unoccupied squares and dirty alleys. Great was the laughter and clatter of sabots, and confusion of banners, as the herd of disappointed ones turned off they knew not whither, but from whence, at all events, they will not see the procession. In a few minutes afterwards the Imperial carriage came in sight, and was received, not with a vigorous shout, but a sort of hum of "Vive L'Empereur," with which our English cheer contrasted well, and made many look round to see from whence such shouts could come. And right graciously, too, were the latter acknowledged by the Emperor and Empress, seated in a chariot with crimson linings, and drawn by four horses, bestridden by the old fashioned French jack-booted postilions, whom I did think were buried in the tomb of all the Capulets. But where were the *Cent-gardes*, or military bands, or other accompaniments of a triumphant entry? It was very odd that they were not there, and should, by their absence, render the pageant so disappointing to the many who came some distance to see it. I wonder what those people who paid dear for seats thought of seeing but

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one carriage, containing their Majesties, and a straggling escort of mounted peasants, with their long black cloaks trailing over their horses' tails?

The St. Brieux authorities had put themselves to enormous expense about the ball that was to be given that evening. They had imported from Paris a tent, capable of holding two thousand persons, and decorated it in the most perfect good taste. The centre, from one end to the other, was reserved for the dancers, and on each side, in four rows of benches, were ranged the ladies; behind the latter, the other sex could talk, walk, or do what seemed best to them. The Emperor's dais at the top, and the military band at the bottom, completed the arrangements. From half-past seven to nine o'clock the invited crowded in, and at the latter hour the room presented such a *coup d'œil* as I had never before seen. The space set apart for dancing had been gently, but effectively, cleared by the *commissaires*, and on the front row of the benches were the gay toilettes of the French ladies, while the different coiffes of the peasantry formed a pleasant back-ground, agreeably set off by the uniforms of the male sex that took up their positions in the rear. The latter were by no means the least remarkable, as regards the diversity of dress and the rank of the bearers. Generals and colonels, bedizened with orders, stood next to black-coated white-tied government *employés;* naval captains and justices of

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the peace were jostled by quaintly-dressed shopkeepers; and gorgeous hussars and lancers stood by the side of peasants in their black silver-buttoned jackets, who still tenaciously clung to their umbrellas, that had done them such good service throughout the day. There were two or three Imperial guard uniforms which had actually been worn by their owners on the battle-fields of Eylau and Austerlitz; and it was even whispered that one of these old veterans was to present a petition to the Emperor, and create a scene. This of course, turned out to be a Brittany myth. Altogether, such a mixture was never before witnessed at a royal ball.

Thrice were false alarms given respecting the arrival of their Majesties, and thrice did that misguided band strike up "Partant pour la Syrie." Once even, all, the ladies obeyed a given signal, and stood up, only to sit down again, amidst a slight titter at their mistake. At ten o'clock, however, the signal was given in earnest, and the Imperial party entered the ball-room by a side-door, and were greeted with the usual mild follow-my-leader kind of acclamation that a French crowd usually indulges in. From my position I had a bird's-eye view of the Emperor, and I could not help thinking "Quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore;" how changed was the Emperor of to-day since I saw him when President in 1850. In fact, I should hardly have recognised him had I met him in a crowd. The

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Empress was, as usual, radiant with smiles, and dressed in the most simple manner, and presented a curious contrast to her sedate husband. An Imperial quadrille, of eight couples, was quickly formed, and the Emperor offered his arm to the daughter of the Mayor, while the latter functionary was honoured with the Empress for a partner. Slowly enough they walked through this quiet dance, during which, there was nothing to cause the spectators any amusement except when the Mayor's daughter rattled on with her partner, just as though it was an every day thing for her to have an Emperor to dance with. The ball being thus auspiciously opened, a quadrille was indulged in by as many as could find standing room, and who took their places down the whole length of the area. Alas! for the white dresses of dancers and non-dancers, when the first movements of those thousands of "fantastic toes" raised up a dust, not only sufficient to dim the lamps, but to cast a halo about them like that which surrounds the moon previous to a heavy fall of rain. In vain were the Emperor's commands executed, and a portion of the ceiling torn away; the dust and heat would have its own way, and no expedient was effectual. In fact, the waltz that followed might as well have been danced in a circus, so thick were the clouds of the uninvited intruder. It was very lucky that most of the French ladies are forbidden by the priests, in this department to dance the waltz,—a practice, by

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the by, that renders a ball in any part of the Cotes du Nord about as lively as a funeral, and compels the youth of France to go for days, before a party, attempting to engage young English ladies for fourth mazurkas or fifth waltzes, so that they may not repose in single blessedness throughout the whole evening. Had every body waltzed to-night, the intolerable dust must have driven the Emperor away quicker than it did. As it was, he retired early, having previously made a tour of the room, and conversed with many who happened to be in the front rank. It is not in my province to tell of what happened after his departure,—of the scramblings for ices and wine, (perhaps I might be called out, like the editor of the "Charivari,") of the excitement, and boisterous movements of the dancers. I will just draw the curtain down, and merely thank the people of St. Brieux for giving me the opportunity of spending a very pleasant day, and, *malgrè* the dust, an amusing evening.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THUS, dear old Brittany, I have explored every nook and river contained within thy boundaries; and I now look back, with unalloyed pleasure, on many pleasant days spent amongst thy inhabitants, to some of whom I feel under great obligations for their civility and general kindness. But far more am I indebted to the good offices of the English residents, who have pitched their tents, some in one place, some in another, and who always were the first to welcome me as a visitor, and show me the best sport that they were cognisant of, or the country could afford. How often, with them, have I disturbed the quiet, that previously hung over the extensive and sombre forests, when, in search of woodcocks, I have made a foray far beyond my usual beat. How often, with them, have I visited the tranquil loch, and, having launched our boat, dealt out destruction to the finny tribe. No matter what sport we followed up, so little jealousy existed, that my friends were ever anxious that I should fish the most promising "runs," or shoot over the likeliest beats in advance of them. With some drawbacks,

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I led a wild and glorious life, and often now, when trammelled by the ties of civilisation, I long to return to those scenes of adventure by flood and field.

To all of this, in the early part of this work, I have been a kind of pioneer, and my path may be followed with much satisfaction and profit by any adventurous spirits, who are anxious to beat the Landes, or whip the streams for a pleasant three weeks. Now, I am going to fly at higher game; I turn to address the "gentlemen of England, who sit at home at ease," with money in their pockets, and their hearts in the right place (as a certain paper hath it), and endeavour to show that there is a new field open to them in Brittany.

Everybody has, doubtless, heard of wolves in this part of France, but few can possibly be aware of the numbers that are to be found throughout the extensive forests, in the departments of the Cotes du Nord, and Morbihan. It should be known that these animals are a perfect nuisance, and inflict the greatest loss on the unfortunate owners of sheep and stock; so much so, that any mighty hunter would be hailed by them as a deliverer. Take for instance, the neighbourhood of Carhaix, where, although woods are scarce, wolves abound. I remember well the very severe winter of 1858, when these animals were more than usually bold in their depredations and nocturnal visits. If a sheep was left out overnight

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by his owner, even in the vicinity of a hamlet, before morning came, it had assuredly fallen a victim. Young colts, too, could not escape their quick-scented enemy, and were inevitably destroyed, unless stabled in due form. A certain gentleman, the descendant of noble ancestors, had a lamentable story to tell me respecting their rapacity. He was returning from Carhaix to his old barn of a chateau, and, *more Gallico*, allowed his dog to range wherever he liked. Before he had accomplished half the distance, he heard the cry of his unfortunate animal, who had been snapped up by a wolf, and was no more seen. The wolf having tasted blood, and liking, I suppose, the flavour, paid his next visit to the gentleman's chateau, and finding the brother of his former victim, carried him off in like manner. Such instances might be multiplied, but these are enough for my purpose.

Now, there are many places that would make good head-quarters for a gentleman and his hounds; and one in particular I will point out, as admirably adapted for the purpose. Half-way between, and on the high-road to Morlaix from Carhaix, is a little hamlet, called Le Squiriou, where there is a kind of public-house and stables, quite good enough for a temporary residence. Large woods and *landes* stretch for miles round this hamlet, and all, or nearly so, are the property of government. These could be rented on easy terms, and constant work could be found for a pack

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of hounds. In the vicinity are the woods of Timour, as well as that of Mons. Duc; and at a still greater distance, but still well within reach, are the far-famed covers of Corvo (phonetic). These could not be hunted without the permission of the proprietors; but the sporting owner of Corvo would, I know, not only be glad to see any one there, but would himself follow *à cheval*, and enter joyously into the sport. As regards that of Mons. Duc, which is quite a strong-hold for wolves, a little tact must be used to obtain permission. The example of the Chateaulin sous-prefet must not be followed, who, without asking leave, came to hunt accompanied by his myrmidons, and was consequently requested by the owner "to move on." When I visited Mons. Duc, who lived in a little den in the midst of his forest, and tilled a few acres, as much for pleasure as profit, he instantly gave me leave to shoot, and said he never refused permission when a polite *personal* application was made. Very few proprietors, I am sure, would refuse their sanction, if they were canvassed properly, and treated in a gentlemanly manner.

The establishment of an English pack would by no means interfere with the two scratch packs of French hounds that sometimes go out on an expedition. Their visits are, like angels', few and far between; and even should they come into the part hunted by the English hounds, they could not draw the forests and woods rented by the latter. But,

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really, little is to be apprehended from this source; for the French packs seem to be kept, like Sir Harry Scattercash's, "for hunting when wanted," and for no fixed times or meets. It is only when a great shooting *furore* stirs up the soul of young France, that he leaves his comfortable (?) much-loved café, and his ecarté, and takes off his patent leather boots. Perhaps, once in three years, the members of the hunt may club their money together, and proceed to some distant villages, to astonish the natives with tunes on their horns, and bad imitations of English tops and leathers. No: I should not think the chances of their advent at an inauspicious moment should be considered any obstacle to my plan.

My idea is, that the great difficulty a master of hounds would have to surmount would be in preventing his pack hunting foxes, with which all the woods are far too well stocked. A huntsman would have far too hard task set him, if he is expected to be always with his hounds in those primæval forests, and stopping them from running riot. The French system, I am convinced, would be distasteful to any Englishman, namely, of finding their game with one steady old hound, and then uncoupling the remainder of the pack. I don't think the other Gallic plan much better, namely, of leaving some carrion for the wolves, and then coming upon the animals unawares in the morning, when gorged with their repast. I confess I do not see my way clear in this matter;

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but I think it a question that a master of hounds could solve better than myself.

Some people might feel doubts, how an Englishman and his hounds would be received in this part of France, and might be afraid of being considered interlopers by both proprietors and peasants. I cannot see why such should be the case. Englishmen are allowed to shoot and fish almost everywhere, why should any objection be made to hunting? I cannot understand why they should be regarded with more distrust here, than their compatriots are in the Basses Pyrenèes, who have now hunted that department for more than forty years. Little or no opposition have they met with in that district. On the contrary, many of the inhabitants highly approve of it, and enter sometimes so strongly into the spirit of the thing, that they will actually shoot a fox before the hounds:—rather a galling thing to us, sometimes, I own—but they consider that, in so doing, they have performed a most praiseworthy act. I am sure if the Breton farmers saw any chance of extirpating their enemies, the wolves, they would join in any project that might be formed, in spite of all my friend, the French count says on the subject. For, when I asked him why the peasants did not trap or destroy their enemies in some way or another, he gravely said, that "We in France *preserve* our wolves, for the pleasure of hunting them in the same way as you do your foxes

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in England." Fancy a Breton peasant preserving a wolf, and abstaining from giving him a *coup-de-grace*, if he ever had a chance!

Some people might think that a winter residence in such outlandish quarters would be dull in the extreme, and that, on the "off-days," there would be little or nothing to do. On the contrary, they would find plenty of shooting in the forests, and, no matter what the weather might be, they would always have woodcocks as a last resource; besides, there are a few roe-deer, and a pleasant day might be passed in beating for them. There would also be "the open country" shooting, when snipes, partridges, and hares would be found in sufficient quantities to prevent a real sportsman ever feeling dull. At the same time, before doing things on such a scale, it would be requisite to remember the old adage of "looking before leaping." It would be decidedly the best plan to secure the woods before importing hounds, for fear the proprietors should take alarm at the magnitude of the preparations, and refuse to come to terms.

I really do hope to see the day when this plan of mine will be seriously entertained by some one, and a new era commenced in Brittany sporting. I should like to see the idea of that American sportsman at Pau—I mean Mr. Livingstone—completely negatived, viz., that no English hound could possibly run down an *old* wolf. I should

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like him to see that English hounds in French hands, are quite different to the same hounds under an experienced English huntsman; and that French masters of packs have not quite reached the perfection attained by their English brethren in the matters of hunting organisation or kennel management. And Brittany is the place where this *vexata questio* could be set at rest, and where climate and opportunity are all in favour of its being accomplished.

So, if ever, in future days, the "Breton Gazette," or the "Morlaix Echo," after the manner of the South of France journals, tells us that B. W. H. (Breton Wolf Hounds) meet at some old chateau, once the property of Anne of Brittany or some bygone celebrity; so, if ever, those old woods and forests re-echo with the deep notes of the thoroughbred English fox-hound—may I be there, not only to see, but congratulate the plucky man who has performed the glorious feat of introducing a good old English sport into *Le pays Breton.*

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CHAPTER XXVII.

In speaking of the lakes and reservoirs that are so frequently met with by fishermen in their angling tours through Brittany, I omitted to mention how rarely these pieces of water could be fished with advantage from the bank, and, how they were often so surrounded by trees, as to render fly-fishing very difficult, if not impossible. A boat is seldom to be found when wanted, and even should there be one, the chances are that its safety cannot be depended upon, and that no amount of repair and patching will make it really sea-worthy. Under these circumstances, an india-rubber boat is the most useful thing that ever was invented, and no person who wishes for first-rate sport should be without one. Mr. Cording, in the Strand, if he has not one ready for immediate delivery, can always turn out such an article at a very short notice. He makes them of three different sizes, namely, six, nine, and twelve feet in length. The two smaller sorts I cannot recommend. They are not sufficiently roomy for two people to use with any degree of comfort, and there is not enough space for the *impedimenta* that

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it is absolutely requisite to keep on board. For instance, it is necessary to carry a large stone and rope attached, that may serve as an anchor when the fishing-ground is reached; a basket and a landing-net must be taken; and last, not least, there must be "ample room and verge enough" for the legs of the two gentlemen, who are compelled to fish in a sitting posture, unless they wish to lose their balance in this very unsteady corracle, and fall into the water. A boat, twelve feet in length, will be sufficiently large to answer every purpose. In it the two rods will have ample room for their sweeping operations, and there will be every accommodation for rowing, as well as landing the fish.

Although some care must be taken of the boat when in use, namely, to avoid bad landing-places, and sharp stones; more supervision is necessary when it is removed from the water, and laid by for another day. Its bottom, after a day's fishing, will inevitably be very wet and dirty; for every splash of the oars, and every fish that is caught, will add its drop to the water in the hold; and every person who gets in from the shore will introduce more or less dirt and small pebbles. Now the latter, if left within, would probably cut the india-rubber, and must at once be carefully removed. But the drying is a work of time, or rather some hours, when a hot fire must never be used. The best plan is, on returning home, to hang it up in some warm room or hall,

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having previously sponged the interior thoroughly. Unless these simple precautions are taken, an accident, sooner or later, must happen; and although it would be a very good joke for the natives to see two gentlemen, their boat having collapsed, swimming for their lives amidst reeds and rushes, it would be anything but agreeable to the parties concerned.

The price of these boats, especially to poor men, is the most serious drawback. Mr. Cording will ask something like thirty pounds for the whole apparatus, including oars, box, &c., and I am afraid, before it is fairly afloat on the waters of *La belle Bretagne*, it will have cost something more. India-rubber and anything that is made of it, is subject to an import duty in France, in addition to which there may or may not be the additional expense of carriage. This latter, however, would be avoided if its owner brought it from Southampton to Havre, (where, by the by, the Custom-house officers are *kinder* than at St. Malo,) and then took it to Morlaix in one of the Finnisterre steamers, that start for that port some two or three times per week.

The boat being bought, and ready for use in Brittany, I must devote a few lines to the places where it can be used to the best advantage. Almost all the lakes and reservoirs belong to some landed proprietor, or are owned by the millers, who live and grind at the head thereof. Sometimes these gentle-

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men owners take it into their heads to preserve the fishing. In this case, if a civil note is sent, or a visit paid to the chateau, permission will generally be granted to launch the boat. A present of a brace of trout will be attended by extraordinary results, namely, that the river will probably be open to you and your heirs for ever.

But, generally speaking, the fishing is in the hands of the Breton millers, who, without exception, are great adepts at catching eels, salmon, and trout. Living as they do by the water-side, they are for the most part fishermen, and are naturally jealous at seeing a stranger and his boat drop down on their lakes, and commencing operations without going through the ceremony of asking leave. Besides, they suspect an Englishman of doing what any Frenchman would had he such an article at his disposal, namely, of putting as many nets round the lake as he conveniently could. A little conversation, however, will soon make the millers easy in their minds; and, even should they refuse permission, there is still left the Englishman's best argument, namely, the introduction of a broad coin into the horny hand of the money-loving Breton. Still, this should really be only tried as a last resource; for if the millers once thought their fishing a marketable commodity, they would set a price on their lakes, as they do on their flour, and permit no one to angle who was not willing to pay for their amusement; in

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fact, would treat future anglers as sponges who could not be squeezed too dry.

I expect I must have seen the first and only india-rubber boat that has ever been launched on the Brittany Lakes, which, until it collapsed, answered its purpose remarkably well. It was especially used in trout-fishing; but, I think, it would have been equally adapted to the higher fields of fishing enterprise. For instance, had I but had that boat with me when I was at Hennebon and Chateaulin, I feel sure I might have caught some of the salmon that rose so often beyond the reach of my fly. I am not *sure* whether the sous-prefet, or mayor, would have given me leave to launch it on these "government waters;" but I do not think, if I had asked permission, that they would have offered any opposition to such a reasonable request.

Now, the river above Hennebon is very broad, and cannot be fished satisfactorily from the shore. On it, as I said in a preceding chapter, there are, at least, three good pools, below the second, third, and fourth weirs; and, consequently, there is more scope for fishing with a boat, than in the more limited space at Chateaulin. A worthy Englishman, who resided for many years at Hennebon, invariably killed several salmon annually in these pools. He was not deterred from fishing by the fact, that the fish in the Blavet do not take the fly so freely as at Chateaulin.

This Blavet, it must be remembered, is what is

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commonly called a late river; that is, that the fish seldom ascend before the beginning of May. The fine weather in this and the succeeding months, has, no doubt, as much as anything, prevented anglers from catching any large number of salmon. Now, an eminent authority, perhaps the best in Scotland, tells me, that when salmon are shy and not willing to rise in the daytime, the proper plan is to try night-fishing, with a light-coloured fly, and that if a heavy dew is not falling, many of the best fish will then be caught. This same person instanced his own success on the river Spey, and told me, that day after day gentlemen used to whip the water, without being rewarded by a rise; but that he would go out at nine o'clock, and, before four next morning, would have caught three or four fine fish. I remember meeting one of the cleverest native anglers in Brittany, who did just the same thing, and caught, during the night-time, enough salmon to make the whole county quite jealous of his success.

If the night-fishing is generally so successful, what an opening there is on the broad surface of the Blavet for the enterprising owner of an india-rubber boat. May and June are pleasant warm months in Brittany, and a night, or portion of it, spent on the water, would not, at this season of the year, make any one uncomfortable. So, perhaps, in Hennebon, at some future day, I shall learn of some *grand pecheur Anglais*, who has been in the

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habit of sallying out at eventide, and returning with three fresh-run fish, to the utter bewilderment of his landlord and the wondering natives. In my mind's eye, I fancy I can already see an English proprietor in the little garden and house that I spoke of at Lochriste. I fancy I can see him at eventide, closing up his cucumber-frames, and then giving orders to his faithful domestic to carry up his boat to the upper pools, where, moored in a commanding situation, and sending his fly with a wide sweep over these splendid runs, may he have the same sport as such an adventurer will richly merit.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

I THINK it will be gathered, from what I have written, that the most serious drawback to sporting in Brittany, is the bad accommodation that awaits the traveller, wherever the best shooting and fishing is to be had. Poverty and oysters, by some curious coincidence, are found to go together in England; poverty and *good sport*, without the oysters, are closely allied in Brittany. How often have I and others wished that we could be independent of the dirt of some houses, the bad dinners of others, and the noisy bagmen in almost all; and how delightful life in these parts might then be made. In fact, I have often wished that I had been the proprietor of a tent, and pondered how such a plan could be best carried out.

The idea first came into my head from seeing a gentleman on his way to fish some of the deep lakes, that lay embosomed in the valleys of the Pyrenees. I met him, when travelling, like a patriarch of old, with his tent, cantine, and other equipments safely packed on the backs of mules, while he and his servant followed in their rear. On reaching the scene of the bivouac, his arrangements were found to

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be perfect, and he was as comfortable as man could be; the only thing that really failed, was the sport that he came to obtain. For the mountaineers, in that spirit of destruction that animates them all, had, the preceding year, taken care to poison with lime the lakes that he came so far to visit, for the purpose of securing for sale the few dead fish that floated to the shore. Alas! unless the scenery recompensed him, he must have come home a wiser and a sadder man. But if this gentleman, some time ago, could, thus easily, carry such heavy baggage to a scene so far removed from England, how easy it would be, in the days of Soyer-kitchens and Bennett-*tentes d'abris*, to organise an expedition that might be productive of amusement and sport.

I mention the *tente d'abri* of my old friend, Mr. Bennett, because I understand it is the most complete thing of the kind ever invented: so much so, in fact, that the English Government is reported to be seriously thinking of adopting them for the use of the army. They say that, in one of full size, sixteen men can find ample room, that hammocks can be slung within, and that a fire can be kept up without causing any inconvenience to the occupants. These are the principal advantages, but others still remain. For if a hammock could be slung with such ease, what a capital place there might be for drying a boat after a day's sport, and what ample room there would be for dogs, guns, and all the para-

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phernalia of English sporting, which, if tastefully arranged, might make it look more like an Indian wigwam than the residence of a civilised white person? Such a tent, on a small scale, would be infinitely better than a moderate room in a very moderate Inn; while the independence of the thing would constitute a charm very much in unison with the tastes of numerous Englishmen.

Next, the question naturally arises, how can such a tent and paraphernalia be carried in a country where many of the roads are so bad, and the travelling accommodation so defective? This difficulty, I think, is easily solved, although the means whereby it is to be accomplished will be rather costly. At Southampton they build a certain kind of double dog-cart, made of wicker-work, and very roomy. One of these might be sent by steamer to any French port, and the duty levied, with the deduction only of a third, will be returned on its being taken out of the country. Horses, well adapted for long journeys, and roughing it in any stables, are to be bought for sixteen pounds and upwards, and at this price, no great loss can be inflicted on the purchaser, whenever he may wish to sell them. A sharp and useful native servant would be invaluable to the stranger, both for the purchase of provisions, and to converse with such Bretons, who may not be able to speak the French language. There are many old soldiers, who have only served half their time, who

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would be glad to accept such a situation, and consider themselves well remunerated with half the salary received by an English domestic.

It is by no means the first time that Englishmen have spent the spring, summer, and autumn, "camping out," under the shadow of a wide-spreading tent, amid some of the pretty Breton scenery. Certain photographers have been here and have committed to paper some of the most picturesque and beautiful spots. I recollect one eminent member of the craft, who very much surprised the official at the French Custom-house with the quantity of his baggage, the variety of his acids, and, last not least, the wonderful tent, that he brought with him. I think the *douaniers* must have taken him for a second Orsini, so narrowly did they inspect his baggage, and the photograph box. I shall never forget his total discomfiture, or the peal of laughter that ensued, when he was made to take his tent from its canvas case, and exhibit it to the gaping authorities. They looked at it inside and out; they ensconced themselves within, and quite bewildered our adventurer with an infinity of questions. His tour, however, went off very well, and he took up positions in that tent, in some of the wildest, but most picturesque parts of the country. He never, so he told me afterwards, had any serious difficulties to contend with, after he had once cleared that abominable Custom-house.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE only thing against my plan, that I consider worthy of any consideration, is, whether, on the whole, the "*jeu vaut la chandelle*," or, in other words, whether there will be sufficient sport to justify the outlay. I am sure the lovers of *battues* and great bags, would be miserably disappointed, and would as soon think of flying, as walking all day for a sum total of twenty head. Still, there must be some few among the rising generation, who care to see their setters do their work properly, and who would be perfectly content with a moderate bag, and a good day's walking. After all, the outlay is not nearly so large as some men make, when they hire a moor or a river in Scotland or Ireland, where sometimes, and in some seasons, the unfortunate renters have less to show for their money, than ever they would in Brittany.

For instance, I should like to see some of the returns from the Sutherland rivers, and certain of the Irish fishings on the west coast, for this very season of 1859. The water, I understand, was very low, and but few fish were taken with a fly in

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some of them. Yet the heavy rent, of course, had to be paid as though first rate sport had been enjoyed. It was but the other day, I heard a most lamentable story of three gentlemen, who passed a most unsatisfactory three weeks in a little cottage near their river, and were compelled to amuse themselves with something far less harmless than angling. One of them became so terribly ennuiyed, that he retired to a neighbouring country town, and, they say, was fascinated by the dark blue eyes of a country belle. I am afraid his future salmon-fishing excursions will be much curtailed by his being himself securely hooked by an engagement of a very binding description. Now, in Brittany, the extent of the country, and the variety of the fishings, must even preclude the possibility of total failure. If a man can walk, and is not easily disgusted by a little bad luck, he must have fair sport. For my own part, I never recollect a day, when, with a little perseverance, and straight eye, I could not make a nice bag. Of course, this was when I became a little acquainted with the country, and the best manner of beating it, which I have endeavoured to describe in preceding pages. Fishing is more uncertain than shooting. Still, from the first of April to the end of May, in all human probability, plenty of fish will be caught in the rivers; and from the first of June to the end of July, some good sport may be expected in the lakes.

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A man who takes over a tent and appurtenances may select many places where he can fix himself with advantage for three or four days. For instance, he might drive along the Carhaix and Landerneau high road, and make his start from the latter place. He would see Commana on his left, before arriving at the foot of the Menez Arres hills. On the west side of the latter he might take an advantageous, and certainly a picturesque, position about two miles south of the village. From this point he would command the whole of the fine country as far as *Le Faou*, and thus be able to sport over a district in which amateurs scarcely ever fire a shot. If he had no great luck here, he might pack up his things at an hour's notice, cross the mountains, and bivouac somewhere in the parish of Pleuyé, where he might not only find plenty of partridges, but vary the proceedings by catching some of the Elers trout. These are only two, of the many spots that I might select, for opening a campaign. There are others, quite as much, if not more, deserving of notice.

Again, in the fishing season, the lakes will often be found to be at some distance from any habitation, and the roads being very indifferent, the time occupied in travelling backwards and forwards will materially interfere with good sport. For instance, supposing a man paid a visit to the Lake of St. Sauveur (*vide* Map), and obtained permission from the mayor to launch his boat; he would have

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lost the best part of the day in travelling, and "blowing up" his little vessel, besides being compelled to leave early, and thus to lose the evening fishing. With a tent, however, at his disposal, he might stay a day or two, fish the lake at early dawn each day, and return to the charge at seven o'clock in the evening; and what time in summer is really better than the two hours that precede the twilight, when trout, that would not move in the day, rise greedily at almost any fly that is offered them?

Fishing with a white moth at night, so frequently practised by the natives, might be prosecuted with great facility by the owner of a tent. He might, at least, do as much as the old Chouan who used to sally out regularly every evening to the river-side, when his daily task of preparing hides and leather had been duly completed. His sport was very great, and many were the large fish that he caught in the summer months. His enemies would say that the odour of hides, that hung about his person, was the source of attraction to the fish! but jealousy will always have some way of accounting for a neighbour's good-luck. Sometimes, however, even when the weather is propitious, the night-fishing will, of course, turn out quite a failure. I recollect an old inhabitant of Morlaix, who used to walk some twelve or fifteen miles every afternoon, to some good fishing place. Here he used to angle

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all night, and return with his spoils in time for the morning market. He was so confident in the success of his art, that he challenged a friend of mine to do better than himself in a given twenty-four hours. My friend selected the pleasant hundred minutes that intervene between seven in the evening and half-past eight, and had the most extraordinary sport in the lake. At nine, the aged piscator commenced his operations, fished while balmy slumbers refreshed his antagonist, and in the morning produced one small trout as the result of seven hours' toil!

After thus glancing at all the advantages and disadvantages of a tent-life, I think I may say that the former counterbalance the latter, and I have only looked at it in a practical point of view, viz., as the means whereby the best sport may be obtained. I have not dwelt on the pleasures of a bivouac in a wild and almost uncivilised country, or the delights of gipsy-life, with only the brown heather or murmuring streams for companions. Besides, there are many men who consider it the *ne plus ultra* of pleasure to depend upon gun or rod for their dinner; although, for my part, after one or two trials, I cannot endorse the idea. For I discovered that the "toujours perdrix," in the literal sense, has given me ever since quite a disgust for the nut-brown bird, while the constant recurrence of salmon at table has created a repugnance to the prince of fish that I cannot easily

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conquer. Still, there is a great charm attached to the capture of the speckled trout, to cleaning him, wrapping him in wet paper, throwing him into the hot wood ashes, in true Indian fashion, and, lastly, eating him fifteen minutes after he came out of the water, Partridges, too, and woodcocks, cooked according to the recipes of Soyer, in a *tente d'abri*, may be much better flavoured than when served up in the execrable sauce with which a Breton cook anoints them; at all events, the plan might be carried out with, perhaps, less discomfort, and more sport, than many of our countrymen have encountered when camping out in the wilds of Canada or the prairies of the States.

In dismissing the subject, I must add one word more, to impress upon the minds of readers how greatly a good Breton servant will contribute to comfort and success. Of course, it is quite a matter of chance whether such a one will be found, but nevertheless they *are* to be picked up in most of the large towns. If he should only be like a Basque whom I had with me on the Spanish frontier, who could speak French and Spanish besides his native tongue, and who could make himself useful in driving a carriage, landing a fish, or making a bargain, the lucky owner may consider himself relieved from all cause of anxiety, and look forward to a pleasant campaign in Lower Brittany.

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CHAPTER XXX.

THE next thing that I have to consider is, how far the introduction of railways will injure the "free chase" in Brittany. In the original plan, I believe, it was the intention of Government to carry a railway through the heart of the country, and so connect Rennes with Brest, without making any detour. They say, in fact, that the Emperor delivered the same answer to the projectors of this railway, as he did to the company who made the line from Bordeaux to Bayonne. For the latter were anxious to obtain the Imperial consent to a bill that would enable them to make a detour, and pass by some of the principal towns in the South; but the Emperor, thinking this was a golden opportunity for opening up the resources of the hitherto neglected department of the Landes, would only give his sanction on the condition that a *direct* line was formed. So the railway was made, and, as every one knows who has travelled in the South of France, its stations are the only houses to be seen in that vast expanse of heather and sand. Its formation has, however,

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made a great change already in the department. The system of draining has been introduced, and farms have been formed, and soon some flourishing villages will, doubtless, be seen where, hitherto, nothing but shepherds on stilts and their ragged flocks of sheep delighted to dwell.

The same plan was arranged for Brittany. A direct line from Rennes to Brest was to have passed through the Chouan territory, and branches were to have been constructed to all the principal towns; but "vested interests" stood forward in opposition to such a plan, in the shape of merchants and manufacturers in the departments of Finisterre and Cotes du Nord, who made such representations as to turn the Imperial mind from its pre-conceived project. So now two lines are sketched out, one of which is to start from Nantes, and will reach Brest by the south coast; the other will begin at Rennes, and, after making a grand detour round the north coast, will arrive at the same destination as the other. Both these lines are already in progress, *i.e.*, the ground is marked out, and the tall posts are put up in commanding situations; but such is the proverbial slowness that attends all French constructions, that four years may be expected to elapse ere either of these grand trunk lines are completed.

These railways will, in course of time, have a certain number of branches, but the French regulations will prevent them being made for many

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years to come, because a company, on obtaining its bill, is bound to make lines in different directions, at an interval of so many years after the main line is completed. Hence, a long period must elapse before such places as Rosternen, Carhaix, Gourin, and others, will be invaded by the locomotive, even should their primeval quiescence ever be disturbed. At the same time, it would be idle to suppose that the railway will make no difference to sportsmen; for, as soon as the main line to Rennes and Nantes from Paris were opened, game began to be dearer and more scarce, and the great decrease of salmon is entirely to be attributed to the facilities offered of direct transport to the Capital. Dear old Murray, to this day, in his Guide-book, adheres to the fact that "Partridges at Carhaix fetch but threepence a brace,"—a piece of information that had a great deal to do with my own introduction to Brittany sports—but, if the reader will substitute the words "Cost threepence a brace before the railways were opened," he will be nearer the truth, as I can testify. Let us hope, however, that the interior will not be injured by the change, or, at all events, that the day is far distant when the "free chase" in Brittany will be quite spoilt by the multitude of *chasseurs*, or the introduction of the same system of preserving that has rendered most parts of Normandy quite a *terra incognita* to the wandering sportsman.

There is a class of men, who, thanks to the power

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of steam, will rejoice greatly at being enabled to see the old streets and cathedral of Quimper, or muse in the ruined tower of Guingamp, a few hours after their departure from the London-bridge Station. I allude to our friends, "the gallopers," who "do" the Rhine and Chamouni in a few days, or linger in classic Rome for a few hours, and, returning to their clubs or domestic hearths, edify their friends with crude criticisms on what they have seen. These are the gentlemen who have conversed with half-a-dozen natives, have dined at three or four *table d'hôtes*, glanced at some old ruins, and last, not least, have scattered their money broadcast amongst the astonished, but well-pleased landlords of Inns. I remember meeting a party once, who were in such a hurry "to do" Brittany, that, although they came to *see* the country, they actually selected a close carriage and a dark night to travel through fifty miles of the most interesting and picturesque part! Surely, they might have gathered more information from a guide-book, and thus been spared the trouble and expense of their midnight tour. Visitors, however, will come when the railways are finished, many of whom will not only be edified, but gather much information from what they see. I only hope that the Johnsons and Smiths of name-inscribing memory will be few and far between, and that they will not "leave their marks" on the fine old monuments for future comers

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to read, and so create disgust in the mind of every man of taste by their insular vulgarity.

But the introduction of railways, and the visits of the tourists, will, I am afraid, lead to an increased tariff of prices at all the Inns. That they are very moderate in the present day, may be gathered from what I have said in preceding pages; so much so, I think, as greatly to astonish a Londoner, accustomed to a Clarendon or Jermyn-street "bill of costs." Now, when Paterfamilias sends his hopeful first-born to visit Continental cities, in allowing him the traditional sovereign per diem for expenses, he reasonably expects that that sum will be ample, provided his son is not allured by the "witching numbers" displayed at Homberg and Baden. In Brittany half that sum may be allowed, and plenty of sight-seeing and pleasant entertainment be had for the outlay. Not but that prices must rise, when Paris begins to take the superfluous produce that this country and the Channel Islands do not consume,—a state of things which will be more a subject of lamentation to the resident than the occasional visitor.

Brittany, from time immemorial, has been quite a godsend to English families desirous of studying the uncomfortable subject of economy. Amongst these I do not, of course, allude to all the residents, who may have stayed for pleasure, health, or sport. In fact, before the troublous year of 1848, small colonies

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flourished in almost every town and village, where the combination of cheap living and good sporting smoothed down the unpleasant idea of expatriation from England. But that eventful era wrought a great change, and caused the departure of many. Some of these "forgot" to liquidate the debts of their Breton tradesmen, who, unaccustomed, like their brethren on the English side of the Channel, to be victimised, did not easily forget the circumstance. I remember the case of one *mauvais sujet* of the period, who owed a large sum of money, and was imprisoned by his creditor. As no hopes were entertained of his being able to meet his liability, the authorities passed him from town to town under the guardianship of the police, and put him on board ship at St. Malo, with a hint that his presence, in Brittany at least, would not be tolerated again. This was an affair much dwelt upon, and pondered over by the Bretons, and did not tend to raise the English name in their estimation. But such cases belong to a bygone time, and I think the recollection of them is fast dying out.

Now, the expenses of any one residing in the country are, compared with England, absurdly small. Money may really be said to go a long way. House-rent, living, and everything is cheap; so much so, that any one blessed with Mr. Buckram's "small independence," can live comfortably. Poor as the inhabitants are, I have known cases where English-

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men have made money out of them by embarking in the butter or cattle trade. And no one can conceive what a field of enterprise is here open to a man of small capital and some industry, until they have seen the traffic carried on between the Breton ports and Jersey. The only thing requisite for a beginner is some acquaintance with the manners and customs of the inhabitants; and by the time that is acquired, and the principal railways opened, a very handsome annual income may be realised, which, with increased export facilities, will be probably doubled.

But I am wandering from my subject, and must return to a thing that more nearly interests my sporting acquaintances. I have no doubt, when direct communication is established with Paris, many newcomers will be induced to take up their residence in Brittany. I think it is very likely that some will follow the example of those who have been before them, and will be anxious to rent some of the old chateaus, which are often to be let for a mere trifle. For there is a sort of romantic notion attached to the fact of living in one of these old tenements, of being the lord and master of a fish-pond, gardens, avenues, &c., to say nothing, perhaps, of a *chasse* strictly (?) preserved—at least so says the worthy proprietor. But, I wish to warn my friends that, however picturesque they may look to the non-occupant with their oriel windows or classic architecture,—however pretty the avenues and old trees may be when gilded

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by the rays of the setting sun,—however like sport the lake may appear when disturbed by the rises of a hundred trout,—I warn them, I say, that "it is not all gold that glitters." No sooner is the agreement made with the noble, or *ig*noble proprietor, than the drawbacks become painfully apparent. For most of these old mansions are out of repair, and, even if they are tolerably air-tight, no amount of wood burnt in those open grates will warm the large apartments. Next, the chances are that the distance from a town is very great, that the roads in the neighbourhood are infamous, and that the damp clings to the walls with unexampled tenacity. Besides, each shilling spent in repairs is a shilling sunk. For no landlord would ever dream of reimbursing money laid out on even the most necessary improvements. I need not speak of the short days of winter, the rains, and the dulness. I could indeed make up a catalogue of disagreeables, that would effectually nip in the bud all the romantic notions that a Brittany chateau might be supposed to call forth.

If, however, a stranger will not listen to this warning voice, but will insist on trying the experiment, let him at all events be careful what bargain he makes with his proprietor. I should recommend him also to employ some respectable lawyer to draw up articles and agreements, unless he is anxious to be victimised in the same manner that a certain Englishman was, who had taken a chateau for himself and

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two friends. The proprietor was Mons. Le Baron, had a high-sounding name, and most gentlemanly address, and, most obligingly, let his mansion on a "repairing lease" for three years. They took possession in the autumn, and when November winds and rains set in, found themselves under the influence of occasional shower-baths, of drafts from doors that had shrunk, of smoke from execrable chimnies, and the hundred and one inconveniences attached to such an interesting relic of antiquity. They patched it up, however, they papered, they repaired, and, in fact, sunk their money, fondly hoping that some day they might be slightly reimbursed for all their improvements. At the end of their time, they were horrified at receiving a letter from the baron's notary, with a long catalogue of damages to be paid for, of furniture to be replaced, the cost of which would have set them up comfortably in a new house. So they referred their case to the arbitration of the law courts, and after many "appearances" and delays they were compelled to pay the whole, *minus* trifling abatements, and *plus* the addition of all the legal costs of solicitors and barristers. Poor fellows! how bitterly they repented the day they entered that chateau, and first made acquaintance with a baron of La Belle France.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

In these troublous times there is a prevailing idea that our visits to our neighbours on the other side of the Channel will shortly be interdicted. The newspapers, the movements of volunteers, and the vaticinations of pamphleteers, all tend to strengthen the idea that war with France is inevitable, and that the precise moment alone remains to be fixed. In the columns of the "mighty 'Times'" I have read the opinions of a Frenchman, founded partly on his own experience, but much more, he allows, on what he has heard from others. When he speaks of an army thirsting for glory, and a navy burning for revenge, he may be correct to a certain extent; but when he talks of Normandy and the sea-bord of Brittany teeming with a population eager for a war with England, and only awaiting the signal to arm *en masse*, I think I may state what I know to controvert such expressed opinions.

I happened to be travelling in different parts of the country when war was declared with Austria, and while it was carried on. The consequences and results of the contest were, of course, a favourite

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topic of conversation amongst all classes, from the highest to the lowest; and I was led to believe that war in the abstract was decidedly unpopular. Pity they all expressed for *Les pauvres malheureux*, as they termed them, who were dragged into the battle-field; and more particularly were they sorry for the poor fellows who, having served half their time as soldiers, and been discharged, were then called upon to leave their profitable occupations, and their families, and proceed to the war. And I can testify to the feelings of the latter, for I know how many deserted, and how many more would have done so, had they not feared those omniscient *gensd'armes*. But far more often did the conversation turn to the momentous question, of "What will the war cost?" This was, indeed, an interesting subject for discussion amongst a people whose whole life is devoted to carrying out the excellent principle of "A *sou* saved is a *sou* gained." Since manufactures have sprung up and commerce been extended, and since thousands have entered for the great pursuit of wealth under the commercial banner, the utility and the price of war has been more than ever canvassed. And, if this was the case during the war with Austria, when but little injury was inflicted upon the merchants, how much more opposed would the Bretons and Normans be to a contest with England, with whom they carry on such an extensive trade? For every inhabitant, however obtuse in some

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respects, is alive to one thing, viz., his own interest; and, as there is scarcely a farmer or manufacturer, who is not more or less affected by the trade with us, it is reasonable to suppose that they would not be willing to cut themselves off from the market from whence they derive such profits. This excellent preventive to war is, I am glad to say, increasing every day; I only wish I could add some statistical returns to indicate how great the trade is that at present is carried on.

In speaking of the probabilities of a war, I am always prepared to hear the late French loan quoted as an argument to prove how popular war is in France. I cannot think that is so. Supposing a voluntary loan was asked for in England, and at a high rate of interest guaranteed by the Government, would not the Stock Exchange be crowded with applicants, and millions, over and above the sum required, be instantly subscribed? And, if people were allowed to invest as little as a sovereign, would not half the savings of the nation be at the disposal of ministers? So, in France, the other day, the subscribers of ten, twenty, and fifty francs, were those who had saved a little, and seized the opportunity of obtaining high interest on the best possible security. I don't think there was much patriotism about it, but that it was simply brought about by the facility offered of investing a small sum.

But there were many large subscribers, I shall

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be told,—men who must have been led by patriotism or love of the war to take their capital out of enterprises that were paying, perhaps fifteen or twenty, and to invest in these new securities at only six per cent. In answer to this, I must remind people how omnipotent for good and evil the French Government is, and how the prefets of the departments have it in their power to injure seriously the fortune of any man. A curious case in point came to my notice, a short time ago, with respect to this very loan. I travelled with two merchants of the town of S——, who had just subscribed for about 2,000*l.* of the new Stock. In course of conversation, I discovered that they held leases from Government, for both land and water-power, renewable every three years; so that the privileges could be cancelled by the authorities at, comparatively speaking, very short notice. Both of these merchants had received the circular and subscription list from the Prefecture, as a hint to subscribe, and nobly had they done their duty. They talked a good deal about patriotism, but, from what they said themselves, and the account I heard of the affair from other quarters, I had every reason for believing that the "gentle pressure from without" had as much to do with the subscription as anything else. Now, we all know that there are many thousands of people, more or less connected with the Government in France, who are liable to this turn of the political screw, and we are

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likewise aware, how often the zeal of the prefet, as is frequently to be read in the "Moniteur," is invoked in such a cause. Taking it altogether, I do not think that the promptitude with which the loan was subscribed for goes far to prove that the war is popular in France.

But this aversion to war, that pervades the rural population, is not shared by the Parisian. I allude to the man who reads the newspapers and converses thereupon, who thinks Gibraltar ought to be given to Spain, and Malta and Egypt to France; who looks forward to many changes that will clip the power of England; and scoffs at the idea of there being any real alliance between nations who have so long been enemies. This is the real firebrand, and the person who is anxious for war. I have, at different times, met a hundred such, who have "dropped down" into the provinces, and employed the shining hour in displaying their oratory at *table d'hôtes* and *cafés*, and using the language of the "Univers" and the "Siécle," in their declamations against us. There was one old veteran of the kind with whom I had many a controversy, more, perhaps, because he spoke English so fluently, than for any love I had of disputing with him. "Sir," said he, "for some months in the year I am obliged to quit Paris, and go to Honfleur and Havre to conduct some shipping business. I have often had to conduct the crews of my vessels from one port to another, and have frequently taken

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some English sailors, as well as my own countrymen. Now, listen to what invariably happens. The men of the two nations are rather amicable during the day; but, after dinner and a glass of grog, high words are bandied between them, which would end in a general fight, unless prevented by the police. Does not this prove how deep the animosity is between the lower classes of both nations? Am I not right in saying that there can be no alliance between people who fall out on the slightest grounds?" In vain did I tell the old veteran stories about Wapping and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and how our English tars would fight amongst themselves, if there was no one else to turn upon, to prove that the love of a row—rather than hatred of France—instigated them in these fights. He would not be convinced, and, I have no doubt, to this day is as warm in his diatribes against England, and eloquent as ever about his journeys with his naval belligerents.

It is all very well for some Parisians, and men of note at Bordeaux and Lyons to storm and fret, but they will not, I think, move the mass of the population to enter upon a war, which must be so disastrous in its consequences. My own opinion respecting the Emperor, which, of course, is worth nothing, is, that he is a firm friend to us; but, independent of him, it is to the good sense of the majority of the French nation that we must look to prevent the outbreak of this contest. And I think

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some hope may be gleaned, from what I have said in the preceding pages, viz., that there are too many "interests" that will be irretrievably ruined, ever to permit such an event to come to pass. Hence, I think, my sporting friends may take comfort, and safely reckon that no untoward event will interrupt their progress through Brittany, or compel them to return home at a very short, but peremptory, notice.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

Before I let the curtain fall on "my doings" in La Belle Bretagne, I suppose I shall be expected to enter into particulars, *i.e.*, give some idea of what game and fish I have killed during my peregrinations. I could furnish an uninteresting catalogue of killed, bagged, and wounded, in the case of game, and of killed, lost, and pricked, in the case of fish. Are not the whole accounts carefully drawn up in my all-chronicling diary? But I always put a very pertinent question to a man, who has been shooting or fishing all the season, viz.: "What was your best bag on any one day?" The answer to this will be the best criterion possible of what sort of sport my friend has had. For there is always an "if," and sometimes many "ifs" to be appended to the account of a day's sporting; by which I mean, that there never was a period of twenty-four hours, without "an *if* some drawback, like bad weather, scent, bad aim, &c., had not occurred," great results would have been obtained. On the one occasion that a man has made his best bag, I presume that he has had fewer *contretemps*.

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So, I think, if I give a summary of *my best days in different years*, I shall furnish the best guide to what may be done with a little perseverance.

Autumn, 1856 (Before I knew the country, or the best way to hunt it). With one other gun, best day: 9 brace of birds, 2 hares, 1 rabbit, and 1 snipe, at Carhaix. No fishing of any consequence, at the end of this season.

1857. Best day's fishing at La Feuillée, and L'Hopital. Result at La Feuillée: 29 trout, that weighed 19¾ English pounds.

On the little L'Hopital stream: 39 trout for 24 pounds.—N.B. I had as good, if not better days, when in company with others, but not so many fish were taken by my single rod.

Best day's shooting: 10 brace of birds, 2 hares, and 1 snipe, to my own gun, in the country between Callac and Carhaix. In the winter, on one day: 5 cocks, 3 snipes, 3 partridges, and 1 wood-pidgeon.

1858. In the Elers. Best day's fishing: 31 trout of 22½ English pounds weight.

Best day's shooting: 8½ brace of partridges, 3 hares, and 2 snipes, on the north side of the Menez Arrez, and to the north of Gourin.

1859. Best day's fishing, in the river Ger, near Rosporden: 44 trout, that weighed 25 pounds English (as near as could be reckoned without my English weights, which had been stolen).

Three salmon is the most I have seen taken *with a*

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fly in one day. I have seen four caught when the worm bait has been used.

And now, I think I may finish this work with a few friendly words of advice to those who may happen to take this as a guide in any tour they make in Brittany. First of all, I must recommend to sportsmen the invaluable habit of perseverance; for, of course, in a country that is open to the world to sport in, there cannot be the same facilities for making a bag quickly, or taking a large number of fish, as in a place under the strict surveillance of a keeper. Next, when you have fortunately lighted upon some good farms and fair shooting, let the spirit of fair play prevent wholesale massacre, which a pot-hunter, rather than a legitimate sportsman, would delight to indulge in. Give not occasion to the natives to say to you, as they have sometimes said to certain unscrupulous countrymen of ours, "Thus far shall you go and no farther," when such a consummation is easily avoided by quiet deportment, general urbanity to all with whom you come in contact, and a little regard for native prejudices. Remember that it is not your country where you are shooting, and that it is not your hay that you are trampling down when fishing some pleasant river; and that if you are interrogated on the subject by an agriculturist, the "suaviter in modo" will probably pacify him without the necessity of appealing to the "fortiter in re," or any abuse. Better far to

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imitate the example of that clerical veteran, who I saw presenting his silver snuff-box, with the blandest of smiles, to every clodhopper he chanced to meet, than give the cold shoulder to those disposed to do you a friendly turn. It was that excellent man, *Mons. le Capitaine* Chevalier, who said, when I told him of my travels and exploits by field and flood, "Did you not find the country people somewhat uncouth in appearance, and dressed in curious garbs, but, at the same time, very *kind?*" I am sure the Captain was right in the main, and I am certain I found more civility and desire to put me in the right way—however ignorant the Bretons might be of the manner of doing it—than I should have met with in many countries, that boast of greater civilisation and intelligence. So, let me bid adieu to Brittany, where I have spent so many pleasant days; and that it may long continue to afford the wanderer the same amusement as it did to me, is the ardent wish of an admirer of its inhabitants, customs, and sporting attributes.

FINIS.

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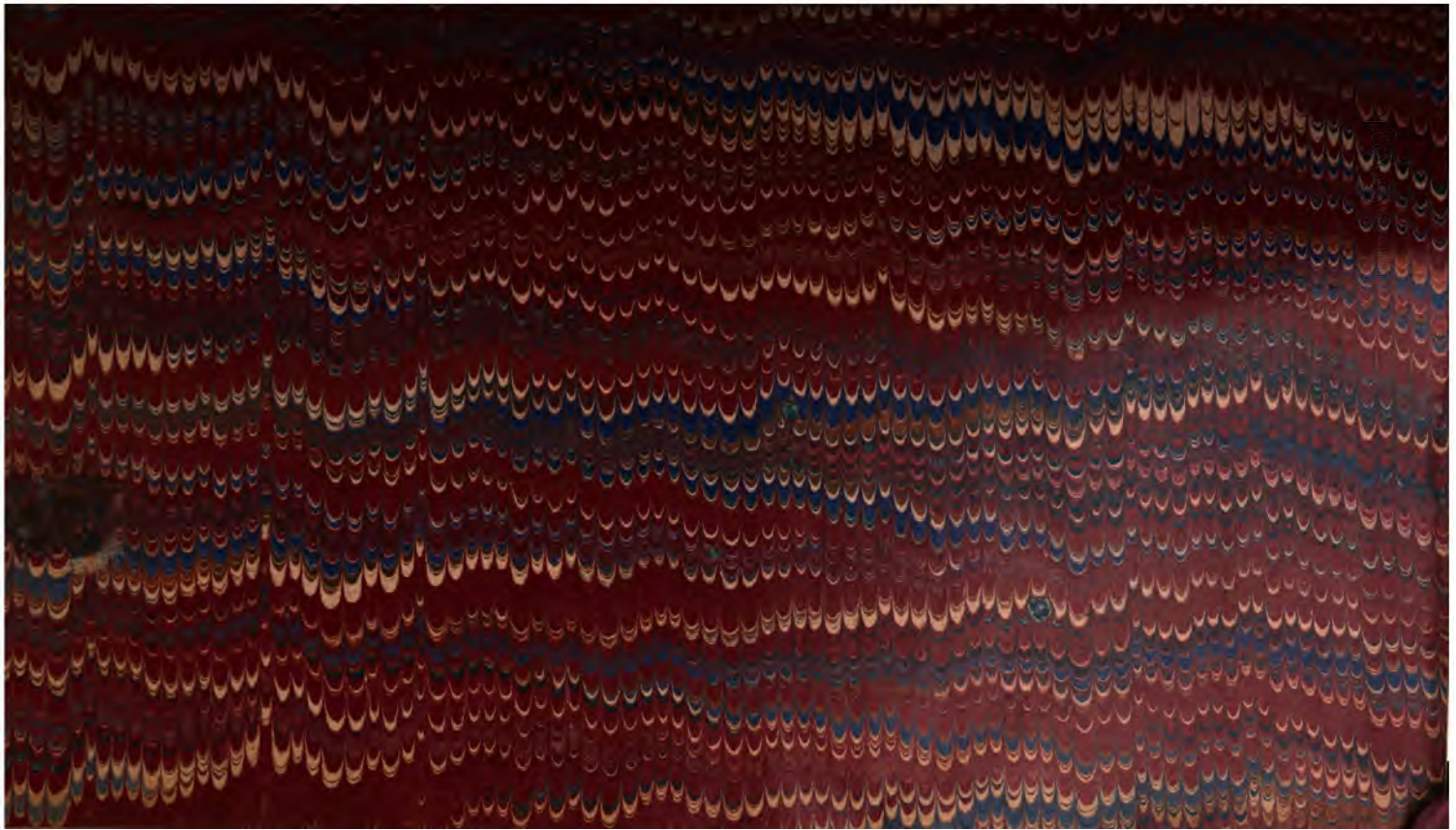

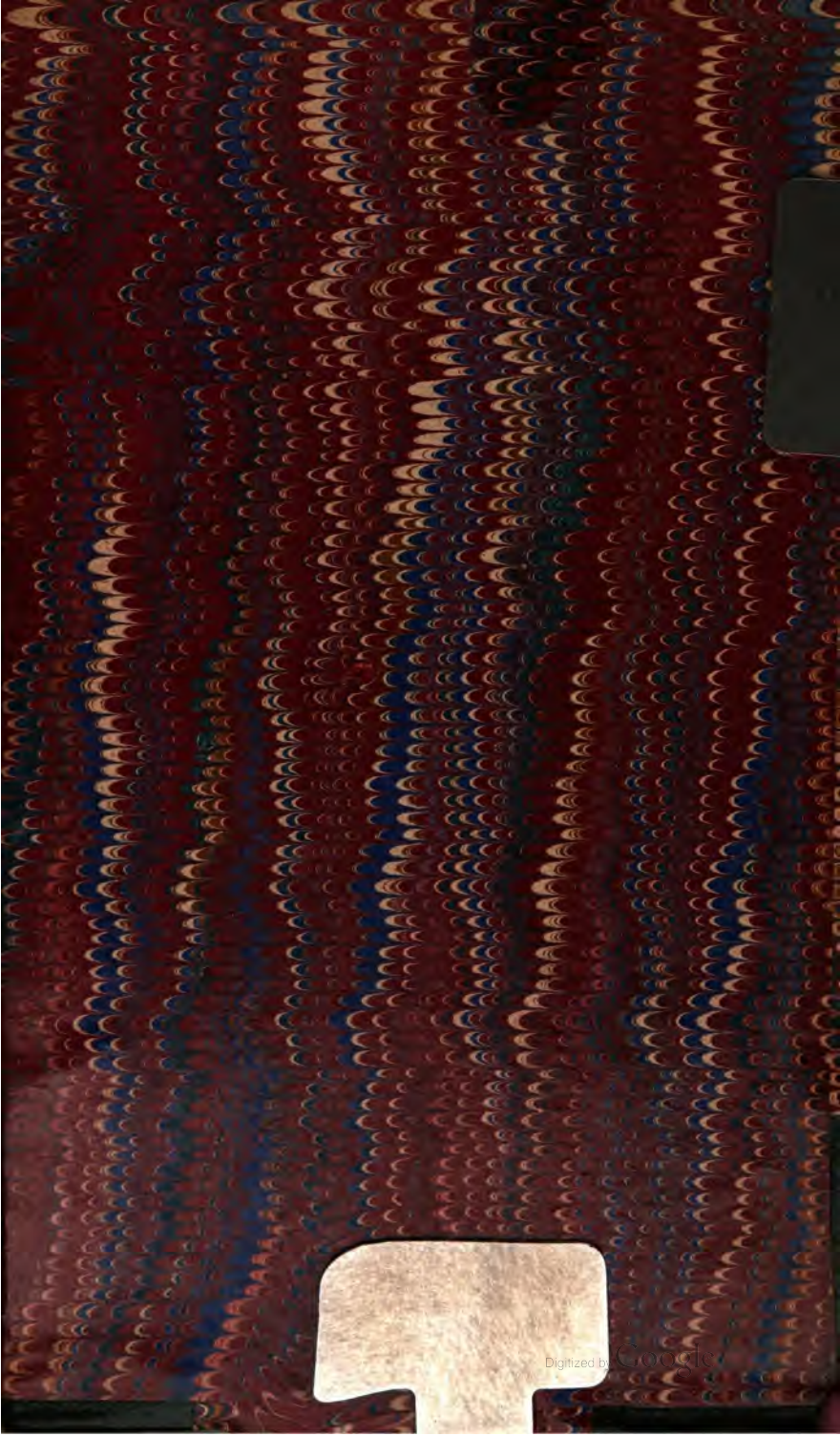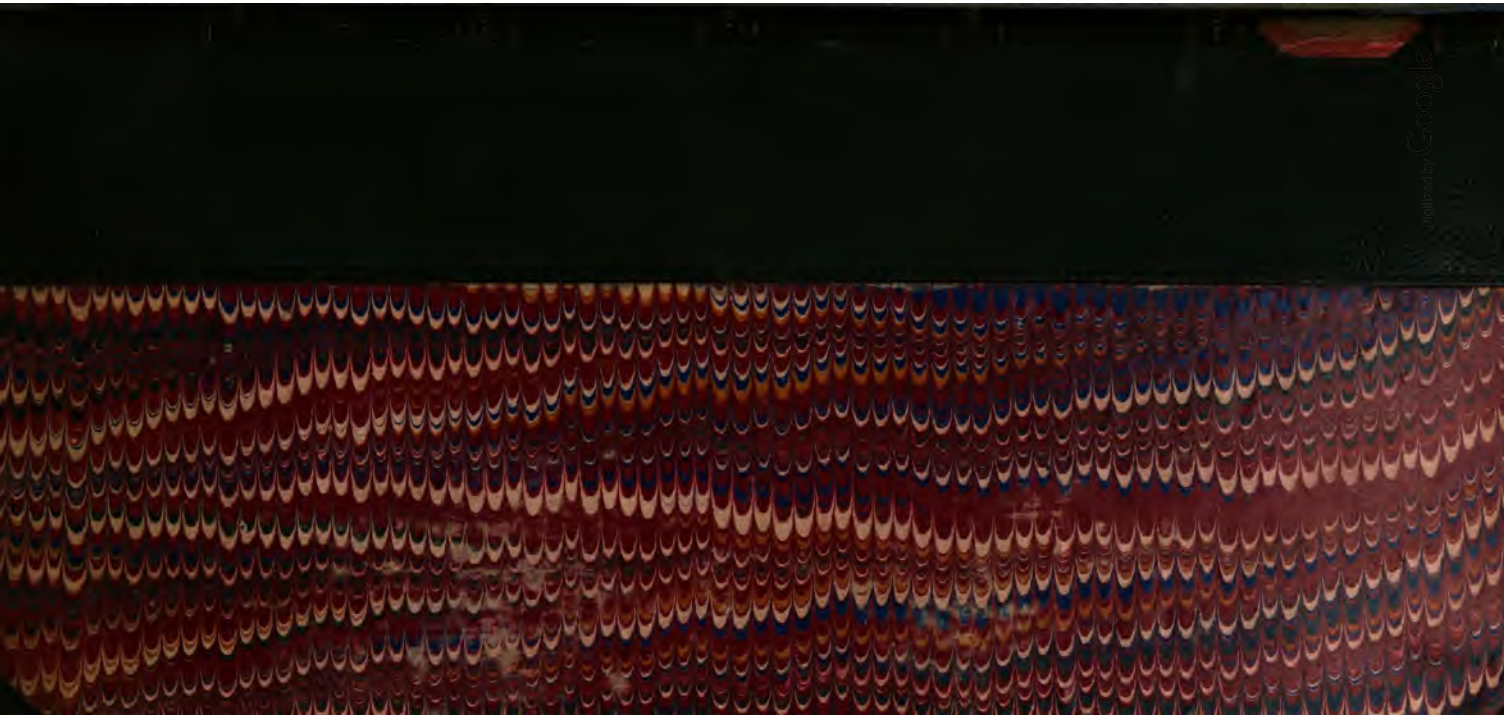
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